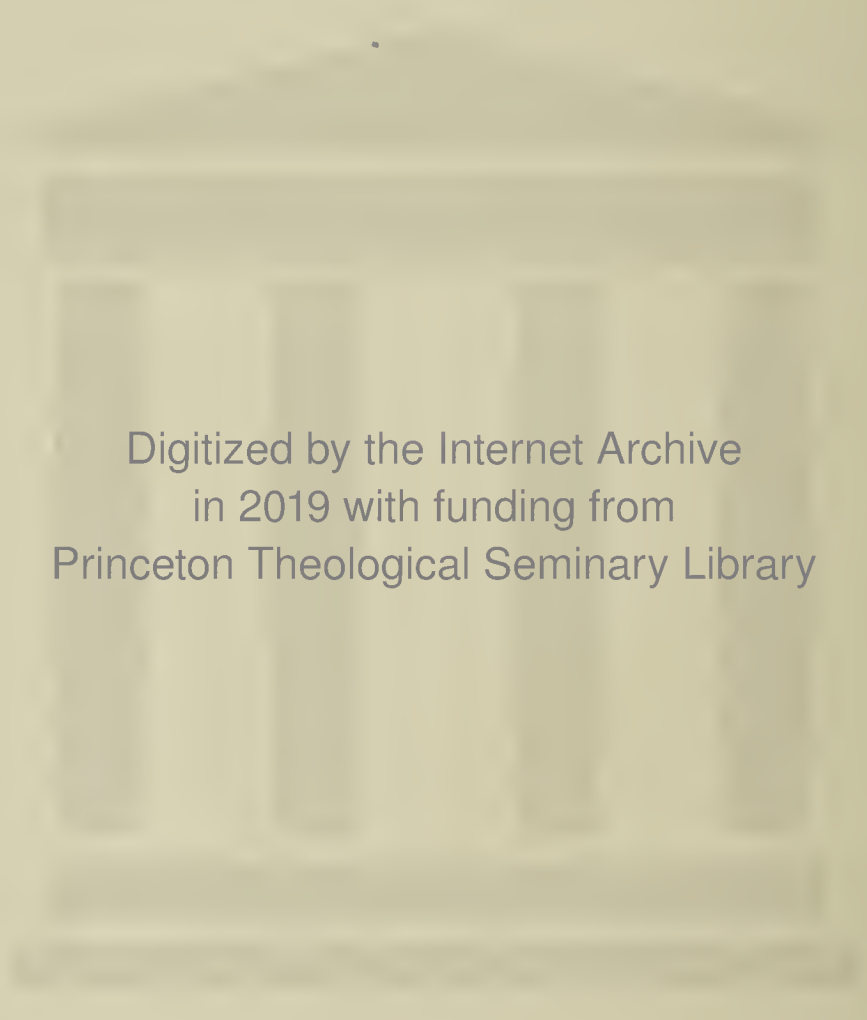


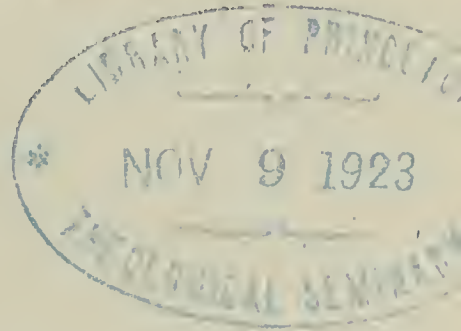
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The kingdom of heaven



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THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

BY
ELBERT S. TODD



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PREFACE

THE reader may notice that in these pages reference is made almost exclusively to the teachings of Jesus. The writer was not unaware of what learned rabbis had written on this theme before the Christian era, or of the frequent references to the subject in the Acts and Epistles, the Apocalypse and the early church fathers. With the latter the kingdom of heaven was incidental and the teaching fragmentary; with Jesus it was a major theme. No further apology seems necessary for the adoption of the motto,

“I prefer, if you please, for my expounder
Of the laws of the Feast, the Feast’s own Founder.”

The Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, but are not therefore equally important or decisive on a point in question. The words of Jesus seem to be in a class by themselves. The four Gospels are four judges on the bench of a supreme court from whose decision there is no

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appeal. As we read what others have written and then turn to the Gospels, we seem to be in the harvest field in Canaan where the twelve sons of Jacob wrought, and to see the sheaves of rabbi, saint, and early Christian, arise, stand round, and do obeisance to the four Gospel sheaves. As we read that "Jesus opened his mouth and taught them, saying," we are eating fruit just plucked from the tree before it passed through the hands of the middlemen, and experience the satisfaction that we remember to have had after climbing the steep ascent and drinking of the rivulet where it burst from the rocks before it could possibly have been in contact with iron pipes, conduits, or weed-cumbered reservoirs.

Nothing was further from the writer's thought than to indulge in criticism that could be construed as destructive. One often finds a sidewalk cumbered by sand, lime, and litter where he can only learn by inquiry if it is the debris of those who tear down or the materials of those who build up. The former process often goes

hand in hand with the latter, as may be seen in cities of southern Europe, where workmen may be seen tearing away the stucco from the façade of buildings erected in the days of the "elder art" in order to uncover the priceless work of master sculptors, which a taste for the baroque in modern art had caused to be plastered over. Without careful inquiry in this matter, the author has made use of his freedom in the gospel to write that which he has found both true and exceedingly precious.

CHAPTER I

FOREGLEAMS

“O brother mine, O beautiful brother, O brother of love, build me a castle which shall have neither stone nor iron; O beautiful brother, build me a city which shall have neither wood nor stone.”
—*Beato Egidio.*

FIRST Elias, then Messiah—thus ran the age-long prophecy. First one who gathers stones out of the straightened highway, levels the valleys, and brings down the hills, then the King, the glowing orb of day, preceded by his *avant courier*, the morning star. In the fullness of time, not one hour too late or early, on the banks of the Jordan, Elias appeared. He was a young man with a vision. The vision, and the message which accompanied it, made of his soul an overflowing fountain and of his voice a trumpet whose tones reached the farthest of the crowd of turbaned scribes, white-robed Pharisees, mailed soldiers, effeminate princelings and the rabble of all Jewry.

“Get ready,” was his message, “for the kingdom of heaven is coming.” His career was brief but worthy of One more than prophet and greatest born of woman. It virtually ended on the day when, recognizing one who came to his preaching, he cut short his swift-flowing words and, pointing to the dust-stained sandals of the Stranger, said: “This is he of whom I spoke, whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. The kingdom of heaven has come. This is the King. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

The fickle crowd, accepting the suggestion, turned to the Newcomer desiring to be shown the new Kingdom. Would he restore the Kingdom of Israel? Could he by divine interposition be placed on the throne of the far-flung Roman Empire and become the master of the world in a day? Perhaps a new kingdom had been secretly set up among the nations, as astronomers assert that a new star now and then appears in the heavens. Where, then, was the capital, and were buildings already erected of proportions commensurate with the dignity of the

new kingdom? Had ministers of state, judges, and treasurers been already appointed? Were there an army and a navy and a standard already inscribed with a fitting device?

They had yet to learn that the kingdom of heaven cometh not by observation. The Queen of Sheba readily found the capital of Solomon's empire, but the capital of this kingdom none could find. Should new Magi from the East come westward with tribute for the new monarch, they must return to report that they found no trace of king or kingdom. Should they persevere and search the world over, they must at the end find what Pompey, the Roman general, found when entering the temple at Jerusalem and insisting on going into the Holy of holies, he found in amazement — *nothing*.

The perplexed people had not long to wait. Fresh from his fasting and temptation in the desert, the Messiah appeared and issued his first proclamation, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come." It was not a prophecy but the

plain statement of a fact. Though it might not number a single subject, the *kingdom had come*, was fully established and functioning. To questions about it, topographical or chronological, his ready answer was, "The kingdom is now in this place, even within some of you."

Yet the people must not infer, because it was not manifest to the sight or hearing, therefore it was something unreal that would vanish as it came, like a dream or a mirage in the desert. The Kingdom on the other hand was the most real thing in the world. It was so precisely because it could not be seen, for it is ever the thing that is seen that is temporal and the thing that is unseen that is eternal. It was a reality in a world of phantoms. It was more real than the rock of Gibraltar, the pyramids, or the fixed stars. In contrast with earthly kingdoms, it was actual and they evanescent. The sea of the nations had often been lifted up by a proud wave called Babylon, Carthage, or Tyre, but, like a wave, each sank back into the deep. They passed away so completely

as to suggest shadow rather than substance. The kingdom of heaven, in contrast, was in process of preparation before the foundations of the world and must endure,

“When the moon is dead and the stars are cold
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold.”

No future Volney shall sit among the ruins of this Kingdom and lament its fall.

Nor must the people think because the Kingdom was unseen, therefore it was undefined, without boundary lines or landmarks, like mist or the shades of evening. Its boundaries, on the other hand, were more sharply drawn than between earthly kingdoms. This side the line was the Kingdom, that side “the world,” or “without,” or “darkness.” Two women shall be grinding at the same handmill, the invisible boundary line runs between them; two men shall be working side by side in the field, one within and one without the Kingdom. Here was no need of a law against the removal of boundary stones, for they were part of the consti-

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tution and foundation of all things. He who would know of the kingdom of heaven must dismiss all thought that he is dealing with mere figures of speech. He is confronted with a fact.

CHAPTER II

A FITTING NAME

“And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.”

It is difficult to express in exact form a living and universal reality. Religion, for instance, is hard to define. We know it is a fact and realize its power but stumble as we attempt to put it into words. The difficulty is that words must be used that express the relations of material things, but fail when we use them to speak of the things of the spirit. The first sacred writers and teachers were artists who, with exquisite subjects in mind, had only charcoal and lime for pigment and a bundle of rushes for a brush. Jesus called attention to the Kingdom, but could not supply words to adequately express its nature and meaning. He could only use such words as were, and gradually adapt them to a new meaning. Hence the argument most frequently on his lips was “It is like.” By what word or words should the new world-scheme be

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known among men? It must cover the relation that he sustained to them as Lord and they to him as followers, together with the new relations they sustained to each other on account of their relation to him and the relation that as a whole they sustained to the world at large. One conception alone sufficed, and that he adopted. One set of words from all possible words he deliberately chose to express this relation, to wit: *The kingdom of heaven*. No religious teacher ever kept so steadily in mind one conception and embodied it so uniformly in one set of words as did Jesus in the use of the "kingdom of heaven." It is needful that we realize this, and a brief review of his life shows its truth.

Jesus began his work by announcing the kingdom of heaven. He sent forth the twelve to spread the news of the Kingdom and afterward the seventy, putting into their mouths the same message. When Nicodemus came to him by night he was told of a kingdom which in his present condition he could not even see. When little children were

brought to him, they and the attendants were told of a kingdom to which the children already belonged. When priests and elders came to confuse him with questions, he told them of a kingdom that publicans and harlots were entering before them. In a time of hesitation and danger he encouraged the timid saying, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The carping scribes were told that they were shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men. A young man who would follow him, but must first bury his father, was counseled to rather go and publish abroad the Kingdom; one who would first bid good-by to his friends was assured that he was not fit for the Kingdom. When they charged Jesus with casting out devils by Beelzebub, he replied that if devils were cast out, it proved that the kingdom of heaven had come. He admonished them that it was better to enter the Kingdom with one eye and one foot, than not to enter at all.

Those who taught and lived his sayings should be great in the kingdom of

heaven, and those who passed them by, the least. Some were eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake and some shone forth like the sun in the Kingdom. They were told that they must have a righteousness greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, or they could never enter the Kingdom, and that the Kingdom should be taken from them and given to the Gentiles. "Not every one," he said, "who saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In the Lord's Prayer, the second petition is for the coming of the Kingdom, and the note of praise at the close is for the Kingdom. The first of the beatitudes mentions the Kingdom, as does also the last. It is the text of the Sermon on the Mount with its three long chapters and one hundred and ten verses. As to the parables, the sower and the seed, the mustard seed, the treasure in the field, the leaven in the meal, the pearl of great price, the fishermen and the net, the marriage feast, the withered fig-tree and the wicked husbandmen, they are parables of the Kingdom.

The kingdom of heaven is the theme of the story of Dives and Lazarus, the wise and foolish builders, the new cloth and old garment, the unmerciful servant, the laborers in the vineyard, the two sons, the wise and foolish virgins, the talents, the strong man armed, the candle and the bushel, the creditor and debtor, the good Samaritan, the importunate friend and the tower-builder. To the same end Jesus told of the lost sheep and the lost coin, the Pharisee and publican and the prodigal son.

In volume the teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom of heaven is greater than concerning all other subjects combined. It has been observed that were the Gospels bound by themselves, an appropriate title might be "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of Heaven." As the end of his ministry drew near, Jesus continued steadfastly in the same doctrine. At the triumphal entrance the humble peasants hailed him as King and without rebuke. On the night of his betrayal, when closeted with his disciples, he reminded them of the

Kingdom. Before Pilate he made frank confession of this kingdom and kingship. On the cross he heard and made prompt response to the knock at the door of the Kingdom of a penitent who would enter. The assertion of Jesus that he was King of a real kingdom was the basis of his condemnation by both Jew and Roman, and *for that he was crucified*. Beyond that, in the interval between the resurrection and ascension, we learn that his blessed employment was "teaching them concerning the kingdom of God."

If Jesus thus set his kingdom to the forefront and with his dying words commended it to the world, it becomes Christians everywhere to earnestly inquire what part he would have it take in the life of to-day. A partial answer to this question is obtained when we discover the true nature of this Kingdom, for every kingdom, as every man, has a character, a heart of hearts, that which it truly is in distinction from what it possesses or does. In its contact with the world a nation leaves its distinctive mark as plainly as a lion his tracks in the sand;

as a robber his thumb-print on the door-jamb. Moreover, a nation has a soul and may lose it and be known, as is the eighteenth century, as "*ce siècle sans âme.*" "The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," wrote Poe of two colossal empires of the past. Each had many things, including vast territory and piled-up wealth, and each by deeds had written its name large in the history of the world, but one *was* that will-o'-the-wisp called glory, and the other was at the last analysis that "vaulting pride which overleaps itself," called grandeur.

Our question is, What is the real nature of this kingdom of heaven, and what may we conclude it will do for the world? We are fortunate in the possession of abundant material for this study. We have the teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom during three years; in the Temple at Jerusalem, in a nursery, by the wayside, on the banks of the Jordan and by the Sea of Galilee, in a court of justice, on the mount and on the cross; to one, to a group, to a select company, to

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a mixed multitude. He taught by a prayer, in a chapter of blessings, in quaint stories, in parables piled one upon another, and in formal discourse. We have also the history of the world in its contact with this kingdom through many centuries. Besides this, not a few know something of the kingdom of heaven, as an experience of the heart.

CHAPTER III

NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

“To-night we’ll wander through the streets and note
The qualities of people.”—*Shakespeare*.

To know a man one must live with him. It is even more true that to know a country one must become a citizen. Still, if one is a keen observer, he may gain a superficial knowledge by even a brief visit. Such is all we may expect to do as, with Baedeker in hand, we ramble among the parables of the Kingdom, so fathomless in depth, unmeasurable in height, comparable to the loftiest mountains, the deepest seas, and the most venerable monumental ruins.

The first impression one is likely to gain is that the kingdom of heaven is at heart ethical. It is a kingdom with a conscience. The scepter is a scepter of righteousness and the throne is a throne of judgment. It differs from kingdoms that are unethical as from those that are nonethical. It believes in justice and con-

sideration for the feeble and the stranger. It does not ignore or belittle the fact that evil exists, evil that is man-made, that is unlovely in character, injurious to its author and the world, an outlaw dangerous to the community, a meteor whose movements are not adjusted to the system of the universe and is destined sooner or later to burn itself up or wreck a world. According to its laws, evil is not the absence of good, or good in the making. Between the two, as to character and destiny, there stretches "the unbridged and fathomless gulf that yearned between the rich man and Lazarus." The right shall be the right and other than the wrong while He endures. In the ensuing world-wide and age-long war, the kingdom of heaven is no slacker nor neutral, but a partisan avowed and outspoken. It believes in law and recognizes the inevitableness of penalty for the transgressor. The unmerciful debtor is delivered to the tormentors, the sleeping virgins are shut out from the marriage feast, the wicked husbandmen are destroyed and their city burned. Yet with this love of

righteousness is cherished profoundest pity for the unrighteous. Nowhere are doors so wide open and welcome so sincere, and love so boundless or such joy on earth or among the angels, as at the return of the penitent prodigal. Nowhere do old sins get themselves buried so deeply and forgotten so utterly. Even God forgets. It is the wrath of a great righteousness which must condemn, which meets with a greater love that must save. Earthly kingdoms have at times been terribly just without an atom of mercy; at other times they have been bountiful in mercy at the expense of justice. In the kingdom of heaven alone they know to decree the extreme penalty of the law on the penitent wrongdoer bating no jot or tittle and at the same time granting him an abundant pardon. The King alone knows how this is. Apart from that "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

A characteristic of the kingdom of

heaven which even a careless observer cannot but notice, has led to its being called the "Sunshine Kingdom." It foretells by its manner in coming among men that it brings gospel as Ahimaaz, the messenger to King David, revealed when far off, by his manner of running, that it was good tidings that he brought. It is the Kingdom of hope and good cheer. It believes in God and man and in the ultimate triumph of truth. Its innermost spirit is unbounded optimism. For the cynic's sneer it has as little fear or use as for the pessimist's moan. Jesus, the splendid optimist, who saw a sunrise glow on the coming years because he had the power and the purpose to actualize it, fills the Kingdom, and in a measure the world, with his hopeful spirit. The things to which he likened his kingdom were, in the main, joyful and cheerful—the waving grain, the diver, emerging from the brine with the pearl of great price, the peasant happy in the discovery of a treasure in the field, the shepherd rejoicing over his sheep that was lost, the marriage feast, the home-coming of one long absent.

Already his parable of the mustard seed which became a tree so firmly rooted and with such wide-spreading branches that the birds knew it as a refuge from the storm and the heat, has fulfilled itself among the nations which, in despair at what seemed the breaking of civilization, turned to his kingdom for hope and cheer. The nations were the three hundred and seventy-six souls on the corn-ship of Alexandria in mid-Mediterranean at the hour when all hope that they should be saved was taken away, the kingdom of heaven was Paul standing on the deck of the water-logged and sinking vessel saying, "Be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life, but of the ship." This rainbow-tinted hope for the world is a reflection of the good cheer brought into individual lives as the green expanse of the forest is the greenness of a vast number of individual trees. From the first Jesus taught that his Father was light and in him was no darkness at all. He loved happiness and loved to see it among men. It followed that the kingdom of heaven must be the head center

of human felicity, and such it was. "Happy," he said, "are the poor in spirit, happy they who mourn, happy the meek, they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, happy all the children of the Kingdom." There are expressions in use in the kingdom of heaven found nowhere else. The words "joy," "peace," and "rest" are used by all classes of people, but largely with reference to something as yet unattained. They are spoken hesitatingly as though they applied to nothing real in life. In connection with the kingdom of heaven they speak not only of joy, but of "joy that is full," "exceeding great joy," "everlasting joy," "joy that is unspeakable." Not with hesitation, but triumphantly as of something present and attainable, they speak of peace, "great peace," "abundance of peace," "peace like a river," "peace that no man taketh away." The mines where the gem called joy is obtained are largely in the kingdom of heaven; the pearl of great price is taken from the water of its rivers.

The world wishes to be happy but does not know how. It cherishes traditions of Utopia and Paradise, but the paths thither have been lost. Multitudes linger about old wells that it is said once furnished living waters, but the wells have gone dry or been filled up. The world is richer than it once was, but, as was the case with Solomon, for some reason cannot eat thereof. It has discovered in a measure the laws of the transmutation of species and can transmute power from one department of nature to another. It has yet to discover how to transmute earthly good into happiness. Yet it is not discouraged and really believes that if it has not succeeded, no one else has done any better. At times it plucks up courage and shouts,

“Hence, loathed melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born.”

Melancholy is too jaundiced a ghoul to listen, and Cerberus too bad and fierce a dog to be frightened. They do not budge. At times they plead,

“Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity.”

The nymphs were ever fickle and moodish. They do not listen or heed. The world does not even pretend to find the bliss for which it sighs. Yet the kingdom of heaven was charged in the first Christian century by Caucilius, a Roman, with being the enemy of joy and the mother of gloom. He could hardly have been ignorant of the fact that at that time, when Rome had the world in its iron grasp and was squeezing it as a sponge in hope of securing a few more drops of pleasure, and had offered a prize to the one who would invent a new pleasure, the great capital was pervaded by a despairing sadness, with disgust and secret loathing of life, which made it, of all times, an age of suicide.

Jesus taught that in his kingdom they knew how to live overflowing lives; not “animality at top notch,” nor culture at the peak, nor earthly good at its full, but life “divine, victorious, complete.” This Jesus hid from the wise and the worldly and revealed to those who could

receive it in the parable of the pearl of great price and the treasure hid in the field. If the world ever regains its lost happiness, it must inquire at the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER IV

FREEDOM

“A sadly toiling slave, dragging the slowly lengthening chain
Of bondage to the grave.”

THE kingdom of heaven stands for freedom. At the opening of his ministry, from the rostrum of the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus said: “He hath anointed me to preach . . . deliverance to the captives, and . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised.” Freedom is in the very air of the Kingdom and the thought of any man being in any sort of bondage to his brother, intolerable. Jesus would have men serve, but serve by choice and call not any man master. A primal impulse of fallen man is to enslave his fellow. Making yokes, forging fetters, building prisons and gibbets is a trade whose origin is in a dim past. Even in Christian countries no small fraction of the population is in jail. The sighing of those bound in some sort of prison has

been quite as constant in the history of the world as the roar of the ocean or the sougning of the wind in the pine trees.

“So free we seem,
So fettered fast we are.”

The coming of the kingdom of heaven was a virtual proclamation of emancipation. Though it is not of this world, it is in it, and implies freedom of mankind from unjust and tyrannical government. In a Roman court and before a judge Jesus protested against a blow dealt him by the fist of a hireling of the government, saying, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?” He was not against the government, but for it in protesting against injustice that must in the end bring it into disrepute. He was the patriot, and the smiter the enemy of the country. As time rolls on, the platform of the kingdom of heaven broadens as a rock on the sea-shore as the tide goes out grows into a wide plateau. There is room enough on the platform of that vigorous protest for all those who struggle against political

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corruption. The kingdom of heaven is not so permeated by other-worldliness as to ignore a struggle for righteousness and justice in this. "He whom the Son makes free is free indeed." Thus Jesus warned men that political freedom is only a fraction of freedom and not its whole. He characterized the Jewish religion as preached and practiced in his day as, in the main, burden and fetter and bondage. Strange as it seems, that religion could change its coat and character, and from being a staff in the hand to lean upon, climb to the neck and become a yoke on which to fasten a load, yet such is the history of many religions from Jephthah to the latest medicine-man on the Indian Reservation. Bondage is bondage, though in place of a tyrannical master or a heartless government there be, at the other end of the chain, a corrupt religious hierarchy, or a cruel and remorseless idol of brass or stone. Political freedom with spiritual bondage is as vain as to free the hands of a prisoner while his feet are left in the stocks. Millions of the race who have been delivered, in the

main, from political tyranny, are in abject fear and cruel bondage to angry gods and evil spirits that dog their steps, frown on them out of the clouds, speak in the thunder, and flame forth in the lightning and the storm.

Out of the heart of man debased by the absence of religion have always sprung shoots that grew into strong arms of habit that have bound him to courses of life degrading, burdensome, killing; leaving him little more freedom than the oak finds when the matadore vine wraps about it its snakelike branches, and rendering him as helpless as Laocoon and his sons in the coils of the serpents. Compulsion is unnecessary. In their blindness men reach out their wrists to receive the manacles and present an ear to the doorpost for an awl-mark of perpetual bondage. They wear their chains and bear the marks of servitude proudly. We do not need to go back to Jesus' day, but we find mention there of some who were "slaves of sin"; of others who "served divers lusts and passions," and of some "who could not cease from sin," but

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were at the same time "speaking great swelling words of vanity" about their freedom. To say I should or would, but cannot, is to bare the neck and reveal the iron collar of serfdom.

The utmost freedom possible the kingdom of heaven has and covets for all men. It does not offer freedom to do wrong or injure one's neighbor. The express train has a right to ask that all obstructions be taken from the track, but not for freedom to leave the rails at will. The earth moves sweetly and silently on its appointed course round the sun and is not in bondage, because it cannot run amuck through the heavens. In that way is no freedom, but wreck and ruin instead. Every step in such a course creates or brings to light other bonds and more abject slavery. The herds on the fenced ranges of the West live in the utmost freedom. They feed on the hills, drink from the streams, and lie down at will. The moment the wild desire takes them to break over restraints, they learn that a barbed-wire fence can make cruel wounds and that dogs and angry cowboys

do not spell freedom. The farmer, worn out with toil, seeks relaxation by a visit to the city. He seeks no high-seasoned pleasure, but relaxation. He may be seen at the parks, the museums, and picture-halls, tired out, but happy. He returns at the end of his week, with no remembrance of having seen a policeman, or heard of a jail, a police court, or anything to make his visit unpleasant. The crook comes to the city to rob and to steal. He comes in contact with officers of the law, makes acquaintance with a judge, rides in a prison van, finds how the inside of a jail looks and how prison fare tastes and what it feels like to lie on a jail bed, and has no end of unpleasant experiences. All these rasping and humiliating things and the law itself "were not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane." If all were righteous, there would be no need of law, save for education and information. The way of the Kingdom is to make men better, ruler and ruled, and thus make the world free.

The kingdom of heaven is committed to unswerving allegiance to truth. Though he refused to become or to be called a king, Jesus said to the incarnation of falsehood and insincerity seated on the Roman tribunal, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Not only does Jesus reign over his kingdom of truth, but he is the embodiment of its inner spirit. He said, "I am the truth." His mightiest utterances were clinched with a "Verily, verily." The gold and silver from the mine and pearls from the sea he leaves to men. On the other hand, truth, wherever found and by whomsoever, he claims for his kingdom. We credit certain truths to Zoroaster or Buddha, others to Plato or Paul. They only found them, and finding does not constitute ownership. The truths that the future folds in its closed hand are his also.

The kingdom of heaven demands of its citizens loyalty to truth. Though it lead to the lions, to the galley, to prison, to

social ostracism, to death, there must be no flinching, no compromise. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth," must be the watchword. In its Hall of Fame martyrs of the truth occupy the first place. The King of this kingdom is one of them.

Nor must men stumble when they discover that truth is not static, but is always leading out and on. Or, rather, it is ever fulfilling itself as the green bud fulfills itself in the blushing rose, the acorn in the oak, the helpless babe in the stalwart and bearded man, the typical sacrifice for sin, in the Christ who taketh away sin. Truth is ever on the march. To be loyal to it men must follow. The loyalty that is true to that which is, denying that it may go on to perfection, is as wanting as the mother love that tarries about the cradle when its occupant has gone on to manhood, and in the struggle of life sorely needs the strength which her sympathy and love would give. Coming up out of Egypt, the Hebrew nation seemed determined to tarry about Sinai where Jehovah had spoken to Moses. They abandoned

the thought as they saw the pillar of cloud far out over the desert, on the way to the promised land. To have failed to follow would have been to lose forever the land flowing with milk and honey, to have no part in the city and temple built on Mount Moriah, no part in Bethlehem and Nazareth and Calvary, the empty sepulcher and the upper room. So often as men think they have heard the last word and begin to build tabernacles to dwell in, they are likely to hear the voice of Jesus saying, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." He, in all the yesterdays and in all the to-morrows the same, is with the years unfolding in beauty and glory. What seems change is only a more complete unveiling. He said, "The truth shall make you free." That would be strange freedom which gave liberty in all things save freedom to follow the truth.

CHAPTER V

ALTRUISM

“There is no social order, no society, no peace or happiness, no righteous leadership or kingship, unless men lose themselves in something greater than themselves.”—*Wells*.

THE kingdom of heaven is differentiated from earthly kingdoms by the loftiest altruism. In ideals and in estimates of what is noble and worth while in life, it came as a revolution. A group of scientists maintain that at some time in the past and for reasons that we cannot now discern, this earth suddenly changed its axis so that the poles took the place of the equator and the equator of the poles. It was conduct extraordinary for this generally stable world, but hardly more marked than that which took place in the world of ideals and concepts of human life. It was unquestioned that if a grain of wheat died, it died and there was no more of it. The new conception was if it dies, it lives, and only by death in this

dark earth, can it live. It was said if a man lose his life, he loses it, and for him there is no other. According to the new thinking, if he lose his life for others, he saves it. According to the old, if a man desired fame, he diligently sought it, keeping himself in the limelight, and drawing in to himself the means to attain his end as the cuttle fish draws toward its capacious maw each particle of food in the water. The kingdom of heaven taught that only as a man forgot himself in seeking the welfare of others would he be remembered. The noblest things were to be obtained, not by seeking, but by renouncing them. If one would rise, he must stoop. Happiness sought as an end was evasive, but happiness renounced, in thought of others, came in double measure to the generous soul. To truly love life one must hate it. It was ever esteemed blessed to receive houses and lands and gold and goods, but the kingdom of heaven would have it that it was more blessed to give them. To surrender goods and lands and fathers and brethren for love of God and country, was to find

them, as Monica found Augustine and Cornelius his household. To be ministered unto, lavishly, obsequiously, was to obtain the highest good the world has to offer; in the kingdom of heaven they thought it nobler and better to minister than to be ministered unto.

This higher conception of life was not altogether unknown in the past, and now and then a noble example of self-sacrifice flared forth in the moral night; it remained for the kingdom of heaven to announce it as its ideal for every citizen of the Kingdom and for Jesus to give his never-to-be-forgotten example of utmost self-sacrifice for the world.

By a process of absorption, rather than by formal acceptance, this ideal of the noblest in life finds place not alone among Christians, but in the world at large. It figures extensively in literature, is emblazoned in art and voiced in song and verse. Who is the greatest? To-day the almost universal answer is "He who serves most." The jingle of gold in the pocket of the plutocrat or the silver tongue of the ambitious statesman may enthuse

the rabble, but not for long, and even that is drowned in the larger and more sincere applause for men of the type of Abou Ben Adhem. The most popular word of the day is "democracy." It points away from self to the many, as autocracy would that the many should pay tribute to the one. A new enthusiasm is spreading from Jesus its center out over the sea of humanity in ever-widening circles. Like the receiver of the telegraphic messages who hears but does not heed the many clicks of his instrument till a well-known signal strikes his ear, so the world hears with much complacency many subtly arranged calls for popular favor, but gives instant attention to news that a new hero has laid his life a willing sacrifice on the altar of his country. The popular heart-throb then is like

"When a deed is done for freedom
Through the broad earth's aching breast,
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic,
Trembling on from East to West."

In the progress of the human race "the noblest Roman of them all" may yet

appear, but we know what he shall be—
a feeble replica of Him who gave his life
for the world. This is a great triumph
for the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER VI

SERVANT OF ALL

“The grace that came to earth and found no word to speak it.”

WHEN the Messiah was published as a carpenter, the world was amused; when he was described as one girt with a towel with a bowl in his hands in the act of washing the feet of a company of peasants, the Jews were scandalized and the rest laughed. Yet thus we must think of him, and in so doing we are noting another mark of the Kingdom as expressed in his confession, “I am meek and lowly in heart.” Perhaps Jesus alone could speak thus without violating the spirit of the words he uttered, for self-effacement is not a plant indigenous to the soil of the human heart. He said in substance: “I make myself of no reputation. I was born in a much-despised city. I have the form of a servant, I travel about on foot, I eat with publicans and sinners, my most intimate friends are fishermen; when

in Galilee I am entertained at the home of a fisherman, when in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, at a home where there are no servants; I choose to have it thus."

Humility, the grace which came to earth and found no word to speak it, has since that time found no words to describe itself. It has been identified with meanness as one might with equal absurdity identify a star and a lucifer match. Counterfeit humility is the most contemptible and altogether the worst fraud on the market of the world. On February 22, 1901, the Holy Synod of Russia published a bitter document of excommunication against Leon Tolstoy, a Christian and world-benefactor. The document was signed by the *Humble* Anthony, the *Humble* Theognose and the *Humble* Vladimir. A letter in a Russian newspaper, issued soon after, read: "You hierarchs teach humility and simplicity and yet you drive about in carriages drawn by six horses; you are clothed in silk and velvet and brocade; you wear miters on your heads and vestments covered with diamonds." The "humble" signatures of

those who in six-horse carriages displayed their silks and jewels is proof that they admired humility and coveted the reputation of possessing it. The description of a piece of land states that it is over against a certain other property and at such and such a distance from a given point. Should one thus describe the humble mind he would say that it was exactly over against pride and a long distance away from it. On the dark and almost unrelieved background of human vanity how starlike glows the lowly Nazarene! How truly epoch-making the coming of the Kingdom of the meek and lowly into a world of brazen self-assertion in spite of the possession of mediocre talents, of coarseness under a thin veil of culture, of scrimping poverty with pretended wealth and of humble birth and ancestry with claim of long and honorable lineage. The absence of the spirit that "minds not high things" and is content, if Providence so orders, with the lowly path and the simple life, leads to an accumulation of excess baggage that makes the journey of life a toilsome and annoying experience. Thus

a man buys a pretentious home to find that he has bought an extensive assortment of cares and expensive discomforts. The few joys and simple pleasures he had, in the old home, refuse to move into the new house. He is there a stranger and has exchanged a care-free home for a jangling servants' boarding house.

For centuries men have been singing "And pour contempt on all my pride."

Should they in good earnest set about the task, what oceans of contempt would be necessary that each act of human pride might receive but a few drops.

Human nature can be depended upon to move in the line of the least resistance, that is, toward pride and away from humility. It is easier to resent a wrong than to forgive an injury. Seeds of pride grow in the worst of soil, especially if it is shallow. An ignorant Negro in a prayer meeting held in a shack in a Mississippi hamlet, a man of forbidding appearance, miserably clothed and without a dollar of wealth, with evident sincerity again and again put up the petition, "Lord, make me humble." With enough, one would

think, to make him humble, he was pursued by the devil of pride. Pride in this case showed itself wanting in pride when it chose such a victim. A man of whom all the people are proud, knew but one poem and that, "O why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" It was because he was great of soul that he saw through the shams and shoddy of a generation that stands at the street corners and in the market places proclaiming its own superiority, and that this life at best is "a fast-flitting meteor, a fast-flying cloud," where pride is but a monstrous deformity.

In this way the kingdom of heaven is the ally of good government and a friend of law and order. In a democracy, especially, men must submit themselves one to another. They must in honor prefer one another and stand by one another, each in his place. The vain, the high-tempered man cannot do this. He must rule or ruin. An army of Benedict Arnolds would be but a herd of wild cattle, a nation of Aaron Burrs would be a continuous storm at sea, wave lashing wave. Humility thus becomes a granite

foundation on which to rest a stable government.

The principles already noted are sufficient to indicate the nature of the kingdom of heaven. A complete summary must include "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise."

CHAPTER VII

THE STONE THAT GREW AS IT ROLLED

“Great is His kingdom and of His dominion there is no frontier.”

BEFORE a sculptor begins to embody a new conception in marble he makes a rude clay image that may be a kind of stepping-stone to the perfect work which follows. The things of earth are rude shadows or first models of things of the spirit, and furnish many hints as to their nature. To one of these we turn for illustration of another characteristic of the kingdom of heaven.

The glacier, especially that of the Alps, has always been an object of immense interest. It was a frozen river filling wide mountain gorges, extending from the cultivated fields at the base of the mountains back and up through the tortuous windings of the canyons to the mountain tops; in depth equaling the height of lofty peaks, piled up in hummocks crossed by wide crevasses of unknown depth, here

suggesting waves thrown up and congealed in midair, and there a cataract caught and frozen as it leaped from a height; in bulk and avoirdupois comparable to mountain ranges. Visitors were too much occupied in admiring its beauty or too deeply impressed by its grandeur to philosophize about it, till a scientist published the conjecture that a glacier was not the static thing they had thought, but that it moved and was actually traveling down the gorge toward the sea. In opposition it was alleged that the road over which it must pass was exceedingly crooked, sometimes broad and often narrow, and that the power to move such a mass must be unthinkably great and was nowhere in evidence. All things must give way to facts and these were furnished by selecting a landmark on the mountain side, and erecting an observation post on the ice, by which it was evident that the glacier was moving with majestic step down to the cities and habitations of the plain. It was estimated that all the machinery in the world, with all the power of oxen, horses, mules, camels,

reindeer, and water buffaloes, would not suffice to move an ordinary glacier a single inch; yet within its congealed mass was a power that easily and without ceasing marched on, carrying with it huge pines and oaks that had been broken off or torn up by the roots, together with millions of tons of rock. No wonder the superstition spread that the glacier was alive. The more ignorant saw in it a huge ice serpent slowly crawling to the sea, a monster of the same race as the giant sleeping under Vesuvius, who by turning on his bed caused the eruptions.

At its inception the kingdom of heaven attracted as little attention as a glacier among the peasants in a Swiss hamlet. The Roman world had become accustomed to an attempt to set up a new kingdom in some of the provinces. It had no vitality and crumbled as a Roman legion appeared. Fanatical Jews had done the same among their people and succeeded no better. When Jesus came preaching the kingdom of heaven, he was regarded as but the last of many to play that role. As the days passed they

noted the spread of the new kingdom from city to city across the seas and over the mountains. Somewhat alarmed, an investigation was ordered. Multitudes were summoned before Roman consuls and not a few were tortured to elicit the truth. The result was to establish the fact of the marvelous spread of the Kingdom and the absence of any reason that could account for it. As to an army, there were two swords, but not a soldier. The navy was composed of a half dozen fishing boats. The capital, if there were any, was the home of a fisherman on the shores of Galilee; as to the treasury, there was none, nor need of one. The citizens of this Kingdom were one and all without influential connections and without standing in society. To learn that the Kingdom was reaching out beyond the Alps and across the Mediterranean and at the same time that there was no reason why it should spread at all, was weird, uncanny. The belief of the Swiss peasants about the glacier, that is, that it was somehow a living thing, became that of the people concerning the kingdom of heaven.

That is precisely what Jesus taught. He said it is like seed that should "*spring and grow up he knoweth not how.*" He said, "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself." "Ye know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." The things that Jesus pointed out as like to the kingdom of heaven were those that had life and motion. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Most of all, he found the heart of his kingdom like to life in some of its forms. That unseen and practically unknown somewhat is one of nature's brawniest forces. Life clothes the fields with grass; it lifts millions of tons of nourishing sap to the top of loftiest trees. It germinates seed in the crevices of castles and towers and overturns them. It fills the waters with fish, the air with birds, and the forests and plains with wild beasts. Yet no one has seen life or heard it. The most we know of life is that it does things, does them quietly and easily and by means of resident forces. Life is its own architect and builder, has its own laws and is its own executor. In this it is like the kingdom of heaven.

It is the stone that grows as it rolls, the river that widens and deepens as it flows, the corn that unfolds from blade to ear and to full corn, the talents that from five increase to ten, the leaven that works on till all is leavened. The explanation is brief—“*Ye know not how.*” One cannot but be conscious that he is in the presence of some deep mystery beyond the vision of the eyes.

“As one who wandering in a starless night
 Feels momentarily the jar of unseen waves,
 And hears the thunder of an unknown sea
 Breaking along an unimagined shore.”

One can easily believe that the stones of the field and the silent forces of nature are in league with the Kingdom. As to Deborah, not alone the hosts of Israel, but the stars in their courses, fought against Sisera, so, with no other explanation, he might think of the chariot of the Kingdom as hitched to and drawn onward by the same horses of fire.

We sometimes look upon change, movement, and even progress, where we are able to see causes which led up to the result. This is, in some cases, a gifted

leader and in others efficient organization. These outside forces are necessary in the measure that the inner spirit and life are lacking. The early years of the kingdom of heaven are only explicable as the result of the working of silent and secret forces.

From the glacier, which for the sake of illustration is the kingdom of heaven, and sighting across to some landmark on the shore, can we not see that there is movement? The mountains do not move, but the ice river does. The mountains are inert, static, dead; the river is life and motion. It has a future and presses on to inherit its kingdom of smiling fields and valleys and its heaven, the wide sea. From our position on the glacier, could we have occupied it in the time of our Lord, we might have seen the Jewish system with its Temple and city slowly passing from sight, the city and temple of the great goddess Diana fade away on the distant horizon, the cults of both Greek and Roman left behind till the tops of ruined temples and broken shrines were lost to view. For the last time the sports of the gladiators are celebrated in the

Coliseum and the curtain pulled down on that cruel spectacle. The Roman Empire that once outlawed now accepts and protects the new Kingdom. Something moves; it is not the old pagan world. Something is left behind to death and oblivion; it is not the kingdom of heaven. In our day we have only to sight from the onward moving Kingdom to the shore to be forced to say, as did Galileo on bended knee in Saint Peter's, "It does move."

One is even more startled to find that a part of this change is in oneself. Without consciously deserting the old ideals or accepting new views, men find themselves at a viewpoint that they never dreamed they would occupy and looking at their fellows and their doings through other eyes than those they once possessed. They are the trees and rocks along the margin of the glacier that, one by one, desert their ancient habitat and join the procession.

Expansion in the kingdom of heaven cannot be measured by the progress or decline of any human institution. To

cherish high hopes for the Kingdom because the church prospers and the world is growing better, or to yield to despair because they seem to be losing ground, is to make the mistake of the passenger in the train who imagines that he is going forward because the train on the nearby track is going back, or that he is going back because it is advancing. The kingdom of heaven stands and must be judged by itself. Is it winning its way as Jesus said it would or is it losing out? Is not the situation this? In all progress there is first the battle for the ideal or goal, then the struggle to realize the ideal. The heads of a household often spend more time and anxious thought in deciding upon the plans and specifications of a new home than over their embodiment in brick and mortar. A battle for the ideals of the kingdom of heaven has been in progress since the publication of its Gospels. Can we say that this battle has been substantially won? What other scheme of world-betterment is even offered? In what larger hope can the world indulge? Toward what star shall

the ship of humanity steer if not toward the star of Bethlehem? On the other hand, the work of putting the principles of the Kingdom into the governments, laws, customs, manners, and social and industrial relations of men is apparently just begun.

CHAPTER VIII

EMMANUEL—GOD WITH US

“The late Dr. Dale has left on record the almost unutterable feelings that stirred within his soul when he first realized that Jesus Christ is *alive*. He thought he had always believed it and had often preached it, but never till one ever-to-be-remembered moment did he realize it.”—*Walker*.

To set forth a great result, such, for instance, as the presence and expansion of the kingdom of heaven, without at the same time assigning some adequate cause, leaves the mind in the condition of the multitude by the Sea of Galilee after the miracle of the loaves and fishes. There was a definite result—the feeding of five thousand. The only thing to account for it, so far as they could see, was a lad with five loaves and two small fish. It is not our purpose, having called attention to the expansion of the kingdom of heaven, to leave the reader to account for it as best he can. There can be but one explanation and that the presence and power of Jesus. This opens the way

to consider, more in detail, the King, as we have before the Kingdom. Jesus taught much concerning his kingdom and much less about himself. He knew the limitations of the human understanding and that to man the nature of God and the scheme of the universe are unimaginable.

The thought of God as one, and at the same time triune, is a noble conception, worthy of being regarded as the utmost of God's endeavor by words to reveal himself to man and of man's by searching to find out God. Here we are swimmers that with few strokes find ourselves beyond our depth and must make for shore. Yet the sea in a rude form instructs us about Jesus and one whom he called his heavenly Father and with whom he said he was one. A part of the ocean is near the shore. I hear the gentle murmur of the waves that wash the sand, or break in thunder upon the rocks. I can swim in it and "fearlessly lay my hand upon the ocean's mane." I can launch a boat and ride upon it. I can know it, I can come into fellowship with it and seek its company whenever my duties will

permit. But this is not all of the ocean. Far beyond my gaze it extends, hundreds and even thousands of miles in all directions, its rocky bed as far beneath the surface as the clouds are above it. There the trade winds blow and icebergs float and deep calleth unto deep. There are the submarine gardens and forests, the caves of coral and the wrecks of man's proud ships. The little that I see is truly ocean, but what of that beyond? Lo, this narrow wash of waves is a part of thy works, O ocean, and of thyself, but the thunder of thy power who can understand? With the ocean in its immensity, I can never become acquainted. I shall die and never see the millionth part of it. It is too big and I too little. I say of it, as Martin Luther of its Maker and Lord, "In his majesty I cannot find God." But God dwells not alone in majesty. He bowed the heavens, came to earth and in the person of Jesus of Nazareth became a Man. Simeon, Anna, and his "pondering" mother were the first to notice that what in the best of men is but a smoldering spark of the Divine Fire, was

in this youth a brightly burning flame. As he increased in wisdom and stature as a man, the divinity within was manifest by words such as never man spake, by Godlike pity for suffering humanity, by helpful deeds of healing, by power to still the tempest and raise the dead and by an expressed purpose, which astonished angels desired to look into, to give his life for man. His coming was not a flash of light which illumined the world for a little while and then disappeared. He came to establish a kingdom in which he would rule till the kingdoms of this world were merged into the heavenly kingdom. He told them that at about the time of his death and for only a little while they would not see him. His absence, he explained, would be that he might be with them thereafter, in a new and better sense. He departed, as he predicted, and came again in power and great glory at Pentecost.

He was, he is the complete expression of God in human form, Emmanuel, *God with us*, earth's Redeemer and King, crowned and pledged to stay by his

Kingdom, world without end; never to leave the field till the final battle is won, never to lay by the ax till the last tree that brings forth evil fruit is cut down or the winnowing fan until the harvest is gathered into the barn. This is the all-sufficient explanation of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is alive; fills the Kingdom with his presence, and maintains it by his power. He is the angel of the covenant that was with the Hebrews in the wilderness, the Captain that as leader of the Lord's host appeared to Joshua, the Angel that spoke to Paul on the Alexandrian corn ship, and the Comrade in White who made himself known to brave hearts on the field of Flanders. He said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Many men have been lifted up on all sorts of gibbets; only One *draws*. "My words are spirit, they are life." Words, in number like the sand on the seashore, have been spoken or printed, to rot like leaves in ravines in the woods, or be shut up in moldy books in libraries. His words not only live, but are life-giving, reaching down into

the tomblike souls of the self-satisfied and the dead in sin, and waking the sleepers. Jesus is the life. The world has long known that all life must come from life. He is the Itaska of the world's life stream. Humanity is not always a prodigal son, enamored of the pleasures of the far country, but one who is sick of the farce and lacks moral energy to arise and go home. It is a traveler in the desert dying by thirst whose immediate need is a little water to enable him to rise and search for more water. This spiritual inertia in men has been the despair of reformers. It caused the death of Confucius and has whitened many a noble head and blanched many a cheek. *Meliora video proboque; deteriora sequor.* The last Adam has proven himself a quickening Spirit, and at his word, men, institutions and nations awake, arise, and come forth. Because he liveth, my race and his kingdom live also.

CHAPTER IX

SEEKING THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD

“Plus il fait jour, mieux on voit Dieu.”—*Lamartine*.

THE Jews were unable to see, at least did not see, that Jesus was their long-expected Messiah. They are still waiting. They have been joined by a goodly company of Christians who are also waiting for the Messiah. To the former, it is a first; to the latter a second coming. The mental attitude is the same. Those who await a second coming tell us that the Messiah has ascended to the Father, but is present by the Spirit. Is not presence by the Spirit the highest form of presence the human spirit can know? Does not Paul labor through a whole chapter to show that the open vision of God which Moses knew, with the entire dispensation written and engraven in stones, had no glory when compared with the excellence of the dispensation of the Spirit. If knowledge of the divine through

the Spirit is the highest form of knowledge and spiritual presence more real than visible presence, why should they not, though now they see him no more, yet believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory? So long as we demand a visible presence, so long Jesus must to us be present only by proxy, which carries with it the idea of absence in person. It may be legal presence, it can hardly be more. It is not a presence that can satisfy the heart. For the time being the world has lost its Lord; the throne of the Kingdom is without an occupant. To hope and love, no one can take his place or supply his absence. Only a mighty faith can dissipate the doubt that if he can leave the world for a century, for a thousand years, for two millenniums, he can stay forever where is no sin to annoy or cares to vex.

Are we compelled to think of Jesus as an absentee Saviour and King? This depends upon the answer we give to the question, What did he mean when he said, "I go away and come again"? In this matter it is vain to open any book

save the New Testament or to consult any other author than Jesus. His references to this theme were many. Of that which he taught, this is the sum: "I am going away, but will surely return. The interval between my going and coming will be brief. My return shall not be after the manner of my going. I go in apparent weakness, I return in power and great glory. I go as the visible Christ, I return as the Christ of the Spirit. My return shall include the apotheosis of my kingdom." His most significant teaching on this subject is thought to be connected with his ascension. Rising through the parting clouds, he shouted back a cheerful message. Two angels remained, apparently to encourage the sorrowful company by the further message, "This same Jesus shall so return in like manner as ye have seen him go." Was the message to inform them of the manner of his return? Of what interest could it have been to them, or is it to us, the manner of his return, if at Bethany or Nazareth, alone, or with a company of angels, clad in the seamless robe, or in

the livery of heaven? One thing was more important at that hour and it was what, and all, that the message said, "*He will surely return.*" So many had gone away who never did come back. As to the expression "in like manner," Greek scholars, not a few, assert that neither in this instance nor in the three other cases in which it is used in the New Testament has it any reference to the manner, but only to the certainty of the fact in question. The sayings of Jesus about his return were no doubt recalled by the one hundred and twenty as they waited in the upper room. Would he really return and, in view of his reference to some great exaltation that awaited him, would he be the same wise, loving, and faithful Friend? They waited as did the household of Saul at the entrance of what they feared was the death chamber of the King. They might have said as Browning makes one say to David as he came forth,

"Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance
sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we, nor until
from his tent,

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Thou return with the joyful assurance, the King
liveth yet,
Shall our lips with honey be bright, with the
water be wet."

The tenth day arrived and with it an end of their waiting. The manifestations of that chief of days in the religious world were unlike, and yet so strangely like, what they had seen before. They brought to mind so much they had heard from Jesus about his kingdom. The one hundred and twenty, and many others, were filled with tumultuous joy, peace, and love. They praised the Lord. Their gladness was overflowing. It was joy "unspeakable," "fulness of joy," "joy like a river," "joy that no man taketh away," joy so great that they were thought to have partaken too freely of new wine. What may have astonished them most was that it was *so like the kingdom of heaven*. Yet it was not more like the Kingdom than the sudden outburst of the spirit of brotherhood, which, floodlike, for the time being, obliterated national lines, broke down the barriers between Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, Jew

and Gentile. "Neither said any of them that aught that he had was his own." "They had all things common." "They sold and gave to the poor as every man had need." It was the altruism of Jesus and his kingdom, that, by a sudden coming of heavenly sunshine and rain, burst forth into flower and fruit. If the kingdom of heaven meant freedom from all bonds and fears, then it must have come in power that day. This man who, amid surging crowds, stands as fearless as a lion and as firm as a rock and charges them with the murder of their Messiah, how little he looks like the coward who quailed before the question of a servant. This Peter and John, arrested and questioned by the rulers of the city and forbidden to preach, how did they dare to put to this august body the question, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye"? How well they proved in the ensuing days that with the fear of man had departed all fear of death and hell and everything but God!

A mysterious power accompanied them

and their work. A single sermon and three thousand were added to the church. They witnessed in power. A great fear came upon the multitude. They were afraid where no fear was. They fled when no man pursued. This, again, was the Kingdom. One by one the principles which Jesus taught in precept and parable appeared in living form among the multitude. Barnabas having land sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Stephen forgave and prayed for his enemies. Peter the Jew entered and ate in the home of Cornelius the Roman. Ananias went to a home on Straight Street, Damascus, and putting his hands on the head of a man who had caused great slaughter among his brethren, said, "Brother Saul." Truly this was the "Kingdom come." The Kingdom of the parables was the United States as it existed in ideal and purpose in the hearts of one hundred in the cabin of the Mayflower and the Kingdom of Pentecost was the United States after the adoption of the Constitution.

Early in that memorable day came the

joyous surprise that this breaking through of heaven upon earth meant the return of Jesus. "This Jesus," said Peter in his great sermon, "hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." The next day the healing of a lame man at the Temple gate was explained to the multitude as the work of Jesus. Stephen at his martyrdom witnessed that Jesus was nearer to him than were his persecutors. It was Jesus who confronted Saul on the road to Damascus and said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." It was he who stood by him at his first trial when all men forsook him and fled and he who appeared to him at Corinth with the assurance that no man would be permitted to do him harm, and he who was with him on the storm-tossed and foundering corn-ship. Even a cursory reading of the literature of that day must convince one that the first Christians were strangely impressed that Jesus was present with them. If Pilate and the high priest were in Jerusalem on that day, and they doubtless were, they saw the fulfillment of a prediction made fifty days before, that

they should see the humbled prisoner before them coming in His Kingdom with great power and glory. His coming at that time fulfilled the prediction that it would be in "a little while," that it would be "in that generation," that it would be "before the company sent out to preach should reach all the towns of Israel," and that it would precede the death of some of the disciples. As to the manner of his reappearing, they were soon to know of believers in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and even in far-off Corinth and Rome, who were saying of the same Christ and at the same moment "Still, still with thee when evening shadows gather." That these, so widely separated, realized "How sweet the consciousness I am with thee" fulfilled the prediction that his reappearing would know no place and be like the lightning, present at the same time in every place.

"We are not to interpret," says the Rev. W. L. Walker, a Scottish clergyman, referring to the ascension, "such language merely literally, but spiritually and truly. It does not mean that Christ rose up in

some outward way to a position elevated above the earth so that he in some way entirely left the world of our humanity, but that he in that humanity which in him became one with God, passed wholly into the divine life, the manhood, as the creed says, being taken up into the Godhood so as to give him full participation in that infinite life of God which is the life of Spirit, and so that he as a spiritual divine and human Personality is present and working everywhere. When he put off the flesh his spirit did not go away somewhere, but became free to be present everywhere and to become thus that indwelling spirit he promised to his disciples. The first disciples might understand this in the sense of local movement, but for us to continue to do so is to materialize spiritual truth so as, in time, to lose it altogether."

Imperfect as may be this survey of the character and aims of the Kingdom which Jesus established, we must turn from it to the more practical question of citizenship in the Kingdom.

CHAPTER X

CITIZENS BY BIRTH

“Try to become little with the Little One that you may increase in stature with Him.”—*Bona-ventura*.

JESUS in his teaching referred to some as being in the kingdom of heaven, to others as about to enter. Some, he said, were not far from the kingdom of God; others were far off. Some not only would not enter but hindered others from doing so. Some were not fit for the Kingdom and some could not even see the Kingdom. From this we infer that it is entirely proper to make inquiry concerning the conditions of citizenship. This carries with it the admission that the kingdom of heaven is as much a reality as any earthly kingdom, Italy, for instance, and entrance to it as valid an experience as landing on the dock at Naples and submitting one's passport and baggage for inspection. This does not apply to cit-

izens who enter the Kingdom by the Birth Gate.

So vast is this number that it gives character to the citizenship body. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Each child born into the world Jesus claims as a citizen of his kingdom. This is irrespective of the flag under which he was born or the quarter of the globe in which he came into life, the religious belief or unbelief of the parents, their Christian professions or their pagan practices, their poverty or wealth, their standing in high circles, or their degradation in the underworld. Nor did it matter if they were children of the Judas who betrayed him, the witnesses who perjured themselves at his trial, the soldier who smote him, or the impenitent thief who railed at him. Not knowing the right hand from the left, with life measured by a few ticks of the clock, the endless task of babyhood in counting the fingers, not yet undertaken, without baptism or name, they are birthright citizens of a kingdom so royal that we call it after the name of the abode of Deity. The name "citizen" in:

this case is no empty title but carries with it substantial honors and emoluments.

The true light that lighteth every man *that cometh into* the world; that is part of the dower of childhood. Is Christ the light of the world? Then we need no further proof that he is the special light of those whose eyes yet blink with feebleness and the unaccustomed glare. One who looks back to childhood with any measure of introspection must discern what was then hidden, that the "Hound of God" was on his track; not the hunter's hound to slay, but the Saint Bernard of the monks' hospice with a loaf of bread and a flask of wine tied to his neck, to succor little pilgrims who had wandered from the snow-hidden road, or perhaps the faithful mastiff swimming out among the breakers to rescue one who, playing too near the edge, had been caught by a wave and borne out. Childhood's days are fondly remembered and often recalled, but could we turn that part of life inside out, we might discover that the hands that fashioned it were those that were laid on the heads of little children.

The dower of childhood includes special protection. Sins against childhood are super-sins on account of the helplessness of the victims. His watchful eye is over all, even down to old age, but only of childhood is it said their angels do always behold the face of your Father which is in heaven. The figure is that of the city under the care of the guardians of the night, but the watchers over some homes, specially menaced and defenseless, have direct access at any moment to the ruler of the city. What is punishment meet for a Pied Piper of Hamelin, or for the crime of leading even one child astray? Jesus made answer. Take the nether stone of the mill, not the hand mill, but the mill turned by the ox in his endless rounds; let the place of execution be the open sea, not the sea near the shore, but out where it has depths. Let the great stone be tethered to his neck and he, disgraced and forfeit of life and hope, be cast overboard; yet even this is not penalty equal to the crime. Forgiving those who sin against him as he has bidden us forgive those who sin against us, can he or we,

forgive those who sin against childhood?

Each baby citizen of the Kingdom has a sacred right to a proper training of his infant powers. Behind the blinking eyes is mind yet in embryo, but potential of subtle grasp and endless expansion. Within the breast is a spirit, but the candle there is as yet unlighted and an altar that has known no sacrifice. Our Revolutionary fathers took up the sword in defense of the right of every man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Claiming it for themselves, can they deny the right to the weakest among them? If to us belongs the right to come to our best politically, shall we be backward in allowing it to our feeblest, as to the whole of life? We may do it, but the kingdom of heaven does not. The debt which the generation passing away owes for what it received is a debt to the generation that is coming. Let parents and guardians, legislators and judges, hear the voice that like rolling thunder comes echoing down the centuries—"Feed my lambs." O, Peter, was it because you represent the organ-

ized Church of Christ that the command was addressed to you? Have a care lest busy with your nets and fish, your lust for the seat on the right hand and the left hand in the Kingdom—your denominational rivalries and contentions about creeds and ordinances—you forget to put in the forefront of your duties the care of childhood.

Of such is the kingdom of heaven. Kingdom of rainbows and flowers and sunshine, of smiles and laughter, of simple faith and unquestioning love, of tears but only like May showers, and of beauty that needs no adorning. Jesus was in this kingdom, but he was also in the world. There he was in an atmosphere of suspicion, meeting with crafty men, who, pretending one thing, had something different in the *hinterland* of the mind, out of harmony with him and his message, if not entirely hostile. How refreshing to turn to this kingdom of childhood, where the citizens were without prejudice or bias, without malice or guile, with no pride of learning or pretense of sanctity, without affectation or self-consciousness, without

covetousness, yet with ships at sea sailing for their harbor, with no past, but a limitless future, with no possessions at present, but boundless hopes for the future! Doff your hat to the dignitary who rides forth in his baby-cart chariot, or sleeps in his royal trundle bed, who swings in his hammock under the dark trees of an African forest or from his mother's back as she toils in the rice field. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Yet there are others of whom we must now speak.

CHAPTER XI

CITIZENS BY NATURALIZATION

“Toward it one journeyeth not in ships, nor in chariots, nor on foot; for to journey thither, nay even to arrive there, is nothing else but to will to go.”—*Augustine*.

THE gates of the Kingdom swing out as well as in. Free will in man is God's gift and the Giver respects his gift. He forces no one to enter; he prevents no one from going out. We are familiar enough with the fact that many, blinded and deceived, barter away their birthright in the Kingdom, renounce their citizenship, and depart for the far country. The prodigal son and the apostate Judas appear and reappear in the history of every village. Though they dwell in tents pitched toward Sodom, there remain faint memories of an Eden where they once lived, which are kept alive by a rosy tint on the horizon toward childhood. For this reason, or because of world-nausea,

heart-hunger, home-sickness, or because the time comes

“When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home,”

some of those who went away return. This brings us to the question of the reentrance into the Kingdom of those who have turned their backs upon it. Jesus said they may not enter again by the Birth Gate, but there remains the Gate of Repentance; they may enter there. He taught that without repentance one could not enter or even see the kingdom of heaven. From beginning to end repentance was in the forefront of all his teaching. The word “repentance” is clear-cut as a diamond. It will not admit of mystical speculations nor theological juggleries. Jesus urged men to repent and upbraided them because they did not repent. That makes of repentance something that may be understood without calling in a theological doctor, and done without waiting for extraneous aid. It is the exercise of the highest because the executive faculty—the will. The passions may rage, the

carnal mind demand, the intellect forbode, the flesh urge; the will as the supreme judge in the supreme court of man may overrule and decide against them all. Repentance respects the decision of this supreme court concerning righteousness. In its heart it is the decision of the will to break once and forever with evil in the heart and life. The forerunner of the Messiah, who preached nothing but repentance, urged that genuine repentance involved renouncing at once and forever the besetting sin. The soldier must give up his violence and false accusation, those living in selfish ease must share their coats and meat with the destitute, the rulers must abandon extortion. It must be done deliberately, absolutely, and in utmost sincerity. "I will," men say as they take the oath of office, "I will" they say at the marriage altar, "I will" they repeat on the witness stand. It is the same "I will" they must use to their Maker concerning the law of righteousness. The human act is but one half the hinge on which the door of destiny turns. The decision made, they would

then learn that when a soul anywhere on God's earth and in any age becomes conscious of sin as manifest in specific acts or a course of life, and resolves to break with it forever, the human resolve meets with the forgiving Spirit of God and from the union issues repentance which on the one side is a human purpose, and on the other an act of God, the visible sign of which is likely to be a few bitter-sweet tears. It may be but partially understood or seemingly trivial, but is as vital to the future life as is the meeting, in the shut-in chamber of an automobile, of a drop of gasoline and an electric spark from whose union emerges power to climb the hill and lift the load. Is repentance of man? It could not be without God. Is it of God? It could not be without man. Is it regeneration? Jesus did not name it. Is it once for all in the life? It is for this day and hour only. Henceforth it is a lifelong holding of the helm of the will toward the North Star of righteousness. Because repentance is a solemn decision in the supreme court of the entire man it is more vital than

raptures, visions, ecstasies, halleluiahs, or visits like that of Paul to the third heaven or that of Dante to the lowest hell. Its value, like the currency of a bankrupt country, has been depreciated to mean penitence and that to involve the performance of a few extra-churchly duties, or the manifestation of a few spasms of fear of judgment to come. Jesus taught that, especially for him who had long lived a selfish life, repentance was the hardest task he ever had or would encounter; that in some cases it was impossible. The gate of repentance, as Jesus saw it, was not like Ghiberti's Doors, a dream of artists, or like the Brandenburg Gates, for the entrance of conquerors. It was narrow; the portal was low. One who entered might expect to touch garments with publicans and harlots, to be one of a procession, not of merrymakers, but of those who, in sackcloth and ashes, smote their breasts saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He must leave his foolish pride behind and stoop and stoop again and lower still. He must learn as he sees smoke

ascending from the valley of Gehenna beside the gate, that it is the smoke of the burning idols of those who surrendered them to be burned before they could enter. "Repentance an easy task"! Did ever lips utter words more untrue? Did the rich young man of the gospel find it so? He had kept the commandments. He bowed before Jesus, desiring to attain to that something beyond the commandments which he saw was the Kingdom which he preached. Jesus saw his sincerity and loved him. But there, occupying the chief place in his heart, was a grim idol. He saw how, in spite of hunger of soul, Mammon ruled. Love of wealth was an oak with roots so deep and far reaching in his soul that it must and would live, however it might fare with the flowers growing on the surface. Jesus saw that for him only uprooting the tree would avail. "Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor and follow me." This was the price of repentance for him. He was very sorrowful, but went away, and we look in vain for his name among the early Christians or in

the number of the one hundred and twenty in the upper room. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Yet a camel may go through the eye of a needle, but only when his body is reduced to its primal elements. This even is easier than for a man, into whose soul the love of riches has entered and grown till it mastered and used in the service of Mammon every faculty of his being, to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Nor did Herod find repentance easy. He was on the road to the Kingdom, perhaps not far from it. He was a devout man and attended the preaching of John and did many things and heard him gladly. In his path stood a woman vain, revengeful, and beautiful and with a strange power over him. Through her influence he put away his lawful wife, angered his brother, and estranged his friends. To repent meant to sever the sinful tie, to array the woman in her wounded pride among his enemies. It meant to make a journey back over the

past, to right the many wrongs that were there. It would be regarded, and would be, a confession of spiritual bankruptcy and of moral breakdown. Would the road through a needle's eye seem more difficult than the road to the Kingdom through so narrow a way as that? He may have done many things after this, but repentance was not one of them. By his situation and influence his might have been a chief name in the early church, but no list extant contains it.

Nicodemus was at one time as near the Kingdom as Herod. He had no such past to fight as had Herod. In place of that he had the spiritual and churchly pride of the men of his rank. When he saw what repentance involved he drew back. Could he give up being pointed out in the streets and greeted as rabbi? Could he endure no longer to be given a chief seat at the feast and to be admired as he prayed at the corner of the streets, or put his numerous and sonorous gifts in the trumpet-mouthed collection chests? Could he endure to hear the taunting cry, "Renegade!" which must often greet him

if he obeyed the voice of his conscience? To his own thinking he could not, at least he did not. Before the Sanhedrin, in timid fashion he defended Jesus only on the ground that the Jews should not break one of their own laws. When Joseph of Arimathæa had led the way in asking the body of Jesus, he joined in making preparations for the burial. Of repentance there is nothing. Why was Jesus so urgent at this point? "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven." "Strive to enter in." Why did he say that only by an earnestness amounting to "violence" could they hope to enter? It was because the road of repentance is a rough and thorny one, and the way thither, like the passage of the bridge Al Sirat, "sharp as a scimitar's edge." When Divine Mercy opens the gate to a mortal and says to him, "Come in," and he, in the exercise of the God-given power to dispose of himself, says, "I will," he has done the greatest thing that falls to him from the first lisp of babyhood to his *nunc dimittis*.

The parable of Dives and Lazarus has been construed to be the pulling aside of

the curtain that hides from our view the unseen world. So viewed, it adds nothing to the view commonly held among the Jews in the days of our Lord. The parable is really concerned with this life and specifically with the reluctance with which men listen to the call to repentance. Such was the case with the five brethren of Dives who were living on the earth the same sensual, selfish lives their brother had lived before them and were likely to come to the same unhappy end. To the assertion of Dives that his brothers would repent if one went to them from the dead—a long absent mother perhaps, a wife, or child—Abraham answers, “No, not even if one went unto them from the dead, they would not repent.” Thorny as is the path of repentance, some in every age have passed along it into the Kingdom to whom we in these more favored times give all honor. Still it shall ever be that “we must with much tribulation enter the kingdom of heaven.”

CHAPTER XII

CITIZENS AT LARGE

“Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.”
—*Isaiah*.

THE world outside the pale of the gospel is greatly the debtor of Christianity. It has also suffered from the narrowness and bigotry of the followers of the Nazarene. On missionary maps the pagan world is shown in deepest black and, with equal error, Christian lands are represented in spotless white. In mistaken zeal for Jesus and his teachings, non-Christian lands and eras have been represented as moral deserts, barren spiritual stretches of heaving ocean brine, or polar wastes where the sun scarce pierces the mist through a short day, and then hides himself for a long, long night. One might infer that “flowers, green fields, fruits and running brooks are only to be found in association with Christmases, Sundays, Christian song, and Bible study.”

This artificial division of the earth peoples is alien to the spirit of Jesus. The so-called heathen are not all depraved, nor are the visible followers of Christ all saints. In privilege and opportunity the races differ greatly, in ideals and struggles for spiritual betterment less, and in the love and care of the All-Father not at all. The earth's surface on the map is divided into hemispheres by the equator, which is represented by a band girdling the ocean. The traveler finds no such line, the ocean north and south scorning such a division. He may discover the equator lying prone upon the water as soon as find recognition of the division of mankind into a favored and a neglected race.

Among the things that are inherent in man, wherever and whenever found, are the existence of a religious faculty and the presence of the Spirit of God.

“Take comfort; earth is full of sin,
But also full of God.”

“The grace of God hath appeared to all men.” It is not a breeze from heaven

that stops short and retraces its course as it nears a non-Christian land, or a river that turns in its bed and flows backward at the sight of a pagoda or a temple of idolatry. It blows, it flows on, it abounds—grace at least—much more then, not less. Where this is the case who does not know that some fruit of the Spirit must be found? Especially must this be in all the East where, as has often been observed, men have not only a full-sized capacity, but a genius, for religion. Where religion means more and sin and guilt are weightier words than in the West, there must be some who have, as wrote Augustine, “the will to go” and where this is the case, there is the kingdom of God. This brings into the Kingdom a third class, which we call Citizens at Large. Our justification for this classification is the four Gospels and the specific discovery of Peter that God is no respecter of persons and IN EVERY NATION HE THAT FEARETH GOD AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ACCEPTED OF HIM. Acceptance with God is impossible save on the condition of submission to his law of right-

eousness. Having no law, he is amenable to the law within his own breast. The struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil in himself until he has reached "the will to go" is not one whit other in Bombay than in Boston. The way in each is straight and the gate narrow. One, being better instructed, passes through in the daylight, the other by night. They are alike fellow citizens with the saints. To the immediate followers of Jesus it was a stumbling-block that he found outside their nation those to whom he was attracted and with whose spirit he found fellowship. Such was a woman of mixed Greek and Tyrean origin whose beautiful faith and devotion to her daughter was a bright star shining through a rift in the cloud in a dark night. In Capernaum the one of all others to whom he was drawn was captain at the military post of that district. Though a Roman, the people said "he loveth our nation"; of another religion, they told that he had built them a synagogue; a man of authority, yet he was greatly concerned about a sick servant; an idol-

ater perhaps, he had great faith in Christ. We can read into the account the soul struggle, sometime, somewhere, by which he came to "the will to go." To those whose sympathies were limited by the bounds of their own nation, Jesus said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." He expressly claimed the patriarchs, who never knew him, as citizens of his Kingdom. In a chapter which has been called the Westminster Abbey of the early church, Paul mentions a score of those who were especially endeared to him. The names are largely Greek, Roman, and Syrian. He was drawn to them because their spirit was so akin to his. He doubtless found many of them in the Kingdom needing only to be made acquainted with the King. To be saved by Christ and to be saved by faith in Christ are not one and the same thing. Not a few of those who through repentance know of the working of the Spirit do not yet know the source of their regenerated lives. The Spirit of God is free, working where and as he will, and one must believe that that Spirit, wherever

found, is the channel through which divine and saving truth has been conveyed.

“A Socrates, a Plato, a Sakya-Muni” writes a canon of Westminster, “had reared their altars to the unknown God; these too were enabled to shed some light on the darkness of sin and sorrow because they had kindled their torches at the sun of righteousness and drawn some sparks of light from the torch held aloft by Him who is both life and light.”

“Whence,” asks Archdeacon Farrar, “got Buddha his purity, or Aristides his justice, or Epicurus his Puritanic virtue, or Cicero his search after immortality, save from the same source as did Isaiah or Samuel or John the Baptist or Paul?” Justin and Clement of Alexandria allow that some of the pagan philosophers must have been instructed by the *Logos*. Who can read the autobiography of Marcus Aurelius, in which he portrays the character of his father and his tutor, coupled with a remembrance that the mind of the flesh never gives way to the mind of the Spirit without a struggle, without being convinced that the three were at least

not far from the kingdom of heaven? Howard S. Bliss, president of the Syrian College at Beirut, was born and had spent most of his life in a non-Christian country before he wrote: "The missionary discovers with a new humility that with very much to give he has not a little to receive from men of other faiths; the mystical element, so prominent in Eastern religions, a becoming reticence in presence of the great mysteries of life, a sense of the nearness of God, a recognition of the importance of religion." From a hospital in Peking Dr. Yu Shu-Fen, a young Chinese physician, sent this farewell message to his friend: "In my enthusiasm for plague prevention I overstepped the bounds of caution and in my constant contact with plague patients I accidentally contracted the disease. I am dying for the people. I make no complaint." With all that Jesus taught in mind can we doubt that he would say, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"? "All are ready to say if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his; too often the corollary that if a man have the spirit of Christ

he is his is overlooked.” By the discovery of the Pacific, Balboa mightily extended the bounds of the ocean world. Making known the citizenship of childhood and of those who in every nation feared God and wrought righteousness, Jesus did a like work for the kingdom of heaven.

“I see,” says Emerson, “that sensible and conscientious men all over the world were of one religion—the religion of well-doing and daring, men of sturdy truth, men of integrity and feeling for others. My inference is that there is a statement of religion possible which makes all skepticism absurd.”

CHAPTER XIII

WHEREFORE A KINGDOM?

“He who is near me is near the fire; He who is far from me is far from the Kingdom.”—*Anon.*

JESUS did nothing for himself. His thought was always of his younger and weaker brothers to whom he would act an elder brother's part. They were sheep in a country that was wolf-infested. They were the good seed, but the soil was thin and rocky and beset by hungry birds. The world in which they must live had only twilight and their eyes were dim and the path sometimes but a desert trail. For these whom he called “my sheep,” “my friends,” “my children,” “my father, my mother and my brethren,” was the Kingdom made ready. The earnest appeal of Jesus that men strive to enter the Kingdom, the prayer of Paul that he might be preserved unto the Kingdom, and the congratulation of John the aged that he and his brethren and companions were in the Kingdom,

would be meaningless if the Kingdom served no worthy end in the life of the individual. It is not essential that we should know how this result was to be accomplished, yet we cannot refrain from asking, though we cannot fully answer, the question. A matter it is of importance in applied Christianity that men should come to a realizing sense of the presence of God. One may hold to the omnipresence of God as an article of the creed, without a realizing sense of its truth as an experience of the heart. Brother Lawrence, a cook in a monastery of Europe, a man long since dead, attained to fame that reaches our day, as one who claimed to realize and practice what he called "the presence of Deity." His fame attests the rarity of the experience. The enormously greater universe which science has given us puts God so far away that to all but pure reason he is lost in the stellar spaces of an infinitely extended creation. Can the kingdom of heaven in any measure bring him back? Jesus announced the establishment of his kingdom on the earth. He encouraged men to think of

him as Lord of this kingdom, seated upon its throne, and filling it with his presence. We do not deny the omnipresence of Deity when we emphasize his presence in his kingdom. For aught we know, his special presence may be manifest in any or every other world. But he is here. He is not far from every one of us. "Lo, I am with you always," he said. Paul wrote to his brethren, "Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord is close by." Can we doubt that one who accepted this presence as a fact would at first visualize and then realize the presence of Deity? Christianity in the first century is a sufficient answer. To the Christians of that day the kingdom of heaven had surely come. With the Kingdom came the King. With both came the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy, "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Those were perilous times, but the martyr fires that lit up the cities were no brighter than the faces of the heroes whose spirits ascended through them, illumined by the same

presence that glorified the face of Moses when he came down from the mount.

To bring back the fellowship of the saints that marked the early history of the Kingdom is much to be desired. Fellowship is strength. The lone tree goes down before the tempest, while the clump of trees and the forest stand. The lone sentinel quails before danger, but give him his company and regiment and he is fearless. In this matter twice one is not two but ten. The genuine *camaraderie* of the Christians of the first century is as unquestioned as its source. A member of a modern church asked his pastor to explain the expression "the communion of saints." In his considerable experience he had apparently not met with any. All admit that the goodly fellowship of the saints might be goodlier. Among Christians there is "a tie that binds," but it is not firm enough to be felt, or positive enough to comfort, or strong enough to rescue in a flood of temptation. The need we have

"To lean on others as we walk
Life's evening path with pitfalls strewn"

is shown by the multiplication of societies proposing as an end some form of benevolence, but really based on fellowship. Stronger than these is the tie of a common country. "My fellow countryman" is an appellation big with meaning to both savage and civilized man. The call to go or do or sacrifice based on the need or peril of a countryman is not in vain. How many by business or destiny exiles in a foreign land know what it means to strain tired eyes for a glimpse of the ship that brings letters from home; or, in a foreign port, are thrilled at the sight of even the most lubberly craft that bears at the masthead the flag of their country; or stop short in the street to note which one in the crowd had used a word of their mother tongue. This tie, written into the constitution of man, Jesus called to a higher service. Those who accept him are no more strangers and foreigners but citizens of his kingdom and fellow citizens of the saints. Fellowship in institutions of this world are often disappointing and always inadequate; in world kingdoms, because of the imperfections

of human laws and the injustice of rulers; in the church, because of class distinctions and the unfortunate divisions of Christendom; in human organizations, because of the many foibles of human nature. Fellowship in the Kingdom and patience of Christ remains as that which can best realize a tie that binds sufficient for life's struggles, its sorrow and its work. Only in the Kingdom can one feel in full measure the thrill of realization that he is "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" that he can never more feel he is standing alone.

For the accomplishment of the tasks of life it is also necessary that there should be a hopeful future. If death ends all, then one may as well lay off the harness and abandon the task. Uncertainty concerning the hereafter is equally disheartening. Not Moses only, but we all, endure when we see, or think we see, the Invisible. But how shall this vision be ours? When our wisest and best have sent forth despairing appeals toward the beyond for even the slightest tokens that their beloved dead still live, and for a response

have heard only the echo of their own voices, can we hope for even partial knowledge, much less for certainty? Jesus affirmed that we might know even to the point that our hearts should not be troubled. In his gospel he tells how this may be. Let one enter by the lowly door the kingdom of heaven. Let him become acquainted with the King and absorb into his life the spirit of the Kingdom. As to a voyager by sea there appears on the horizon a gray shadow which rapidly becomes a mainland, there comes into his consciousness the assurance and the spiritual vision of a country and a life beyond. The source of this knowledge is indicated by the fact that should he subsequently be faithless to duty and false to the King, the vision fades away into the shadow and the black fog of doubt shuts down upon him.

CHAPTER XIV

METHODS OF THE KINGDOM

“And when we looked for crowns to fall
We find the tug’s to come—that’s all.”

—*Browning.*

THE place of the Kingdom in the life of the individual still claims our attention. In the thought of Jesus those who entered his kingdom were children even though in the world they were greeted as “Rabbi.” They had everything to learn and some of them nearly as much to unlearn. After their vision of the new life they must translate it into character and conduct. At the same time they must carry on the struggle for the extension of the Kingdom, spending life with the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other. The Kingdom aims to aid in all these particulars. Erroneous ideas as to the nature of salvation and the way by which it may be attained render the work difficult. Some are slow in learning that packing a satchel for a long journey is

not equivalent to reaching the journey's end, nor buckling on the armor reason for commencing the shout of victory. To mistake the peace of repentance for the possession of a Christian character is to mistake matriculation at the university for a diploma and a finished education. The student may enter the university and the immigrant the country by a short and easy way, but to get the university into the student and the spirit and ideals of the country into the foreigner is a long and laborious process. The word "salvation" may be defined from two standpoints. It is first a work done for us by Christ through whose death there is extended to the sinner the grace of pardon. This salvation is only potential and becomes actual by the repentance of the individual. Salvation is also, to use the words of Channing, "to be rescued from moral evil, from error and sin, from the diseases of the mind and to be restored to inward truth, piety, and virtue." In salvation, according to the first definition, man has no part, but according to the second definition he has

a first and vital part. He can lay hold, he can welcome, he can second the work of Jesus, who, to this end, is an everywhere present and quickening spirit. He has over the whole the veto power. While this is the case, it would seem that emphasis should be placed on making what is potential actual, which is to center attention on man's part in man's salvation. A glance at the trend of doctrinal teaching shows that this is not always done. The foremost theme in the preaching of the last generation was the atonement. The great and glorious truth was proclaimed from Spirit-touched lips and tongues of fire as never before. It is a theme that can never grow old or fail to interest. Yet this must be allowed. It is in a realm in which man cannot add to or take from or change one iota. At the end of all preaching it remains an amazing wonder of divine grace. Meanwhile in the neglected background is the practical truth that the atonement is the foundation on which each must erect his house of life. The student who expends in exulting that he has a chance to

obtain an education the time and vigor he needs to obtain it, is neither wise nor grateful. The kingdom of heaven places all emphasis on acceptance and utilization of the offer of grace. Jesus said little about his vicarious death for sin but much about his triumphant life and power in behalf of sinners. The way of the Kingdom as he taught was the way of the athlete struggling manfully in the arena, the way of the husbandman sweaty with toil in the field through the long, hot day, the way of the fisherman, whom each new morning as it broke over the water, found busy with his nets. He would have them work, pray, give, resist, strive, fight, deny self, pluck out right eyes and cut off right hands, suffer and die if need be. It required much self-denial, it meant habitual subordination of the lower to the higher. The Kingdom was opportunity, the more precious because so brief.

It is quite the custom to divide life into two parts, the part that looks toward the earth where we earn our bread and the part that looks toward God by which we hope to gain heaven. To succeed on

the world side of life, we are told, one must exert to the utmost and continuously every power of body and mind. The heavenward side is gained by faith and prayer. Jesus reverses this order, putting exertion and struggle for the things of the soul and quiet trust for the things of the world: "Labor not for the meat that perisheth but for that which endureth"; "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"; "Why take ye thought for raiment?" "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"; "Strive to enter in." Through all the teachings of Jesus there is a note of trust for the things of this life and of urge as to the things of the Spirit. It emphasizes salvation as the attainment of Christian character and places the responsibility for this upon the individual. It would no more think of receiving this as a gift from God, save as all things are his gift, than to expect proficiency in music or the sciences in answer to prayer. But one class of educational institutions offer an education on quick and effortless terms. They may be found through the

columns of the dailies along with the get-rich-quick schemes, the cured after the use of three bottles method, or the drugless method without even one. Paul preached salvation by faith, but it was a salvation that must be "worked out with fear and trembling." At a first reading of the faith chapter in the Epistle to the Hebrews one sees the power of God working through worms and clods of earth. A closer study shows that it was Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah and David and Samuel who, through the help of God, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, and stopped the mouths of lions. Nor does the kingdom of heaven hold out promise of short or easy victory. "Working out," said the late President Bliss, "the beast is no holiday jaunt; the ape and the tiger do not readily die. One cannot truly love God and self and man, one cannot put righteousness, justice, mercy in the forefront of life without a willingness to give up ease and comfort and popularity and power. It is a life experience in which step by step, day by

day and year by year, we have the happy satisfaction of knowing and feeling the increase of moral and spiritual strength." To publish salvation as a work wrought out by Christ and received once for all, like a legacy, is to present a pitiable half-truth which easily becomes an excuse for spiritual sloth. The conception of progress by growth seems ever in the thought of Jesus. To describe this growing life of the soul in language borrowed from physical dynamics is misleading. A native of the polar regions, knowing nothing of the vegetation of the tropics, is led by the accounts of sailors, who must describe things in the only terms they know, to think that there is one crisis hour when a groan of mother-earth proclaims that seeds in the earth have burst their covering and another day when the sod heaves and everywhere those long buried seeds come forth from their graves, and still another day when all together, with loud acclaim, they leap into the maturity of harvest. He may later think that he was deceived when he finds only a silent and gradual process. That which he perceives

is not less wonderful than his former thought, but more. The explosive power of dynamite is a feeble thing compared with the power of life. Along such a path the citizen of the Kingdom is led.

Jesus was a man of the world. He never represented life in the Kingdom as that of an anchorite in his cell. He began his work at a marriage feast. He left men in the world where he found them, the steward busy with his accounts, the housewife with her bread, the merchant with his laden camels on the way to the distant market. He would not take his people out of the world because they needed the world. Without it they would be an airship where there was no atmosphere or a steamship where was no water against which the propeller strove.

The more clearly we perceive that the aim of Jesus was to develop a vigorous manhood, ennobled by a righteousness that the world must respect, the more we have a vision of his purpose in the establishment of his kingdom.

CHAPTER XV

HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM

“Distinct like the billows
Yet one like the Sea.”

THE aim of the previous chapter was to define the relation of the kingdom of heaven to the individual. Besides the life which each one lives to himself and God there is a life which each lives in association with a greater or less number of his own kind. It is life in the community, the clan, the organization, the nation or the race. It is as one of a group or community that each one does the greater part of his work and lives his life. The evolutionist suggests that the tendency to divide up into groups is an inheritance which man received from a far past when his lowly forbears lived in droves, flocks, and herds. However that may, or may not be, men find within them a compelling urge to combine and organize. Of constitutions framed and adopted, of associations formed, of lodges,

chapters, benevolent societies, churches and sects there is no end. With civilization the number grows. Was it the thought of Jesus that these human associations should merge into his kingdom, as the lights of earth pale in the glory of sunrise? Would he uproot or unseat them and thrust them aside as hindering weeds or stones of stumbling, or would he foster and use them?

Of organizations the church is foremost numerically, and potentially it will suffer as an illustration. It is of unquestioned influence among the forward-looking nations, and a power among the more backward. It has the ear and in the main the confidence of a larger constituency than any other institution. As might perhaps have been expected, at an early date it was rent in twain and the two hemispheres have since been subdivided into fragments so small as to excite the laughter of a gainsaying world. Yet it must be admitted that the tendency to separate and organize around some truth, fact, or form of worship is the expression of something deep in human nature.

Even the older religions, that of the Buddha in India, or of Assyria, whose winged deities look down upon us from their pedestals in the museum, or the cults of Egypt, were not able to save themselves from the inevitable tendency to divide up into sects. Nor may the prayer of Jesus, that his followers may be one, be quoted as inhibiting the formation of sects. He was there speaking of his followers as individuals. He would have them one as he was "one with the Father." That we know was not in outer form, but in spirit. It might not follow that if they were one in spirit they would wish to belong to the same church or be identical in creed. It is possible that, in view of the fact that "he knew what was in man," Jesus never contemplated or desired a complete oneness in doctrine, discipline, or outward expression of the life of the soul. Yet he taught meekness, tranquillity, harmony. How could these abide in the midst of numberless divisions? It is evident they could not, unless a centripetal force could make itself known strong enough to overcome

the centrifugal tendency to separation and consequent discord. The principle underlying the union of divergent parts and varied functions is revealed in the prayer of our Lord. It is briefly this. Oneness is attained by merging objects of like nature in one of a like nature though on a higher plane. Thus the members of a family are one in the united head of the family and the families become one in the tribe. The individual members of the human race differing in race, customs, laws, and speech, become one in the Federal Head of humanity, the God-Man. In form and function, how varied the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and nostrils! Paul saw a beautiful oneness therein, not by the other members going over and forming one great eye or hand, but by each remaining itself and becoming one in a human body. The planets which watch above us in our sleeping hours are each unlike the other in size, in the number of their satellites, their diurnal and annual motions, and, as far as we can tell, in surface configuration. In their midst is an orb, like themselves, yet

greater than they all combined, not a dead world, but one which has light, heat, life, and color for itself and each of them, and holds each one in leash in its orbit. In this glorious orb of day the planets become *one solar system*.

Our Revolutionary sires were divided into colonies founded by peoples of divergent stock, cherishing different traditions, customs, and aspirations. In vain they strove to reconcile their differences. Virginia would be Virginia and Massachusetts none other than Massachusetts. It dawned upon them that they could never be one by selecting one colony as a model and making one great Maine or New York. Instead they created a nation called the United States of America, merging the colonies in it, and thus became one. By degrees the many languages of the colonies became what has been facetiously called American English; provincialisms disappeared, business in various quarters was coordinated, and political differences were adjusted. By emphasizing their oneness they became no more colonies, but so completely a nation

that the average citizen cannot say if each sovereign State has a separate flag. He knows that over all floats one flag. He knows that the tie that binds the still sovereign States is not a rope of sand.

These illustrations point the way to the only possible union of the several fragments of the church. To expect organic union is to expect that human nature will reverse itself. Already what amounts to a notice comes from China that as Christianity becomes a part of the life of the people it will take on an outward form and assume a government adapted to the genius of that race. India is destined to have a type of Christianity purely Hindoo. Surprising readiness is seen in many quarters to accept the teachings of Jesus coupled with a decided inclination to discriminate between the wine and the bottles in which it is brought. The present divisions of the church are destined to abide because rooted in racial traits and linked with faiths and philosophies inbred for ages. So the denominations are like to survive and the last chapter of the world's history may treat

of groups and races that make the voyage of life with a pronounced list toward Paul or Apollos or Cephas. How, then, may such a measure of unity be attained that denominations may not fritter away their strength in duplication of effort in the same field or drive far hence the dove of peace by mutual jealousies? For an answer we point to the kingdom of heaven. It too is an organization, broader in its scope than the sects, embracing the nations, the ages, and what Paul calls the "heavenlies." It seeks as an objective the same ennobled earth and redeemed humanity for which the denominations strive. Among organizations it alone is infallible and without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Human organizations spring up in a night; they have their little day and pass away. The Kingdom endures for aye. Was it not the thought of Jesus that these human organizations should find their oneness in the kingdom of heaven as the colonies became one in the nation? His words are few at this point, for as yet there were no divisions, but does not the emphasis which he placed

on the kingdom of heaven lead to this conclusion? Decades now pass with never a difficulty between the several States. Might not the same heavenly harmony reign among the sects of Christendom if they emphasized their oneness in the kingdom of heaven as much as the States their oneness in the nation? Does not the realized unity of Christendom depend on whether Christians shall stress the denomination or the kingdom of heaven? To speed that day must not the sects learn to say of the kingdom of heaven as John the Baptist of its Founder, "It must increase but we must decrease"?

CHAPTER XVI

THE KINGDOM AND THE KINGDOMS

“How fair his friendship and his leagues how just,
Whom ev’ry nation courts, whom all religions
trust.”—*Prior*.

THE nations also, what would the kingdom of heaven of them? Would it break them in pieces as a potter’s vessel and of the fragments form a kingdom of mankind? Would it rub out national lines and seek to efface racial idiosyncrasies? Why destroy that which the God of nations, during so many ages, has been of such great pains to develop? In case of success what an uninteresting old world we should have! Is mankind, then, to have no more legacies such as law, literature, or art in its varied forms, built up by one race and bequeathed to the world?

Of the nations, their capitals, domains, piled-up wealth, armies and navies, the kingdom of heaven covets nothing. It seeks no dominion over racial activities

or censorship over national traits or customs. It offers only to each nation, as a guide and an ideal in working out its destiny, the principles of the kingdom of heaven.

Our day witnesses the manifestation of what has been called a world-consciousness. Men are speaking in terms of the whole, as never before. They are asking as to a proposed reform, not only is it good for us, but is it good for the world? A spirit is abroad which suggests that if a nation has found anything good, it share it with the rest. The proposal to build a Chinese wall about a country in our day would be sure to call forth the suggestion that it be built around the whole race. We hear talk of remaking the world, as though the efforts of humanity thus far had resulted in building a city, like Rome in Nero's day, which we, after his example, must put to the torch and make over again. The will to build anew will not be seriously undertaken until an understanding is reached as to what kind of a world men want. In all building the architect's plan comes

first. There have been numerous futile attempts, like that of Alexander, the Cæsars, or modern instances, to unite all nations under the dominion of the strongest, or to subordinate the nations to a ruling spiritual power, or to make of all peoples a great world-democracy. The times in which we live call for a new and comprehensive plan for a new world. Gifted with abundant resources and surrounded by hosts of willing workers, the world has been marking time because lacking an ideal. The situation is not unlike that in Rome at the time of the erection of Saint Peter's Cathedral. The Catholic world was united in the project to erect the grandest edifice which the world contained. Elaborately engraved columns, beams of precious wood carved and embellished, stones from old temples and palaces of the Far East were arriving and skilled workmen lined the roads leading toward Rome. The material was useless because not made to fit a designed place and the workmen were idle because all was in confusion. There was need that one should set forth a design that

would visualize to the people the enormous structure that they saw in shadows. The advent of Michael Angelo with such a plan and the ability to inspire confidence in its practicability, put an end to confusion and uncertainty. A greater than the four-souled Florentine puts forth a plan, and there seems to be no other, for the rebuilding of the world. The kingdom of heaven has no world policy, knows no favored race or class, is partial to no particular form of government and views with equal eye each section of the globe and each branch of the human family. It offers certain well-known principles as constituting together a working plan for rebuilding the temple of humanity. It must not be inferred that such a plan will be acceptable only to so-called Christian nations. Races classed as non-Christian have been learning in the hard school of experience through the ages. They have sifted some things, weighed others, and put still others to the acid test. The small remainder that was proven gold did not go back into the ore-bed with the passing of those who mined

it, but remained as part of the wealth of the nation. In volume this accumulated treasure is not small. The astonishing thing is that it is so like to the gold of the kingdom of heaven. This should not seem strange, since all truth is one in essence and origin however varied the channels by which it comes to us.

The human family in its old home in central Asia divided into two sections which went forth to try their fortunes in the new earth. One turned Westward to people Europe and America and in the process to attain to a knowledge of Jehovah and of Jesus and the principles of his kingdom. The other branch turned to the East and the South to people the waiting lands and to learn in the school of experience lessons in self-government and national comity. In due time East and West meet to compare the treasure they have gained. In language, customs, and religion they differ widely. In the principles that should guide nations in their intercourse with each other, the men of the East have much in common with Jesus and his kingdom. It is suffi-

cient ground for the hope that the vision seen by the seer of Patmos may become fact and in ideal and purpose, the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

CHAPTER XVII

WAS JESUS MISTAKEN?

“As remarkable is the enormous prominence given to the teachings of what He called the kingdom of heaven and its comparative insignificance in the procedure and teaching of the most of the Christian churches.”—*Wells*.

THE first chapters of this book were devoted to the initial proclamation and early days of the kingdom of heaven. At that time the Lord's land was a thriving province of the Roman Empire, its towns and villages numerous and its population considerable. With no agency but the natural one of the human voice and presence, the message of John was echoing from Dan to Beer-Sheba with news that the Kingdom was coming. It was the theme in the market place as men met for trade, and at the corner of the street where women tarried to gossip. Interest grew as one told how he had heard John preach and others that they

had seen him afar off. This meant preparation for the twelve and the seventy as they journeyed from city to city with the message of repentance. When to these was added the voice of Jesus teaching everywhere as he journeyed, it could truly be said that the Kingdom filled the land with itself. It was as much in evidence as Cæsar's kingdom, even though the latter had a visible government with magistrates and a Roman legion to represent it and enforce its laws. The sea not only of waters but of the years rolls between us and that distant shore. Those who visit it find many regrettable changes. They can barely identify the land of which they read in the Gospels, as the vulgarized and commercialized Holy Land of to-day. Slowly the footsteps of Jesus are being erased by the erosion of the years and the tramp of careless pilgrims. This matters little providing the Kingdom which he founded abides and prospers. How fares it in the Jordan Valley, where John first announced its coming, and by the Sea of Galilee and in the region about Jerusalem where "without a parable

of the kingdom he spake not unto the people”?

Is the kingdom of heaven foremost among Christian ideals and first among agencies to make vision a reality? It is with no little disappointment that we turn from an era when Christianity not only taught but *was* the kingdom of heaven, to times in which it plays a lesser part. This is by no means to deny that Jesus is taught as truly and sought as earnestly now as then. We are not now speaking of Christianity as a doctrine or an experience, but of the method of bringing it to the attention of the world. As respects this, Jesus made much of the kingdom of heaven; the twentieth century does not. The plow is a symbol of civilization as the bow and arrow of barbarism. It stands for law, culture, and peace. But the plow is also a means by which civilization is attained, since its actual use leads to plenty and that to civilization. The kingdom of heaven, in like manner, is both the perfect ideal of a redeemed earth and a chosen instrumentality by which the ideal is to be realized. Organized Chris-

tianity accepts the kingdom of heaven as an ideal, but has thus far made little use of it as an agency. The failure has found apologists and even defenders. Christianity, they tell us, is a life, and life is only another name for growth and change, the sloughing off of the old and the putting on of the new. For this reason they expect that Christian truth will require frequent restatement and as to the outer form and furnishings of the temple, of religion, predict that a complete house-cleaning and refitting may be expected from time to time.

Yet life in any of its forms is confined within the limiting walls of its own genus. Within these narrow borders there may be endless changes. The attempt to break over the bounds is abortive. The apple tree has numberless species but never becomes an oak. A student of natural history calls attention to the many species of the genus elephant. They are large or small. In color they are white, brown and even black. One species has a convex and one a concave forehead, one has small ears and tusks, another wide-flapping

ears and huge tusks. Yet the life elephantine has through all ages differentiated within narrow limits. The elephant carved on the temple walls of the ancient Assyrians is the same as the elephant in the modern circus parade. The only perceptible difference is in the shape of the howdah and the color of the trappings. Christianity is indeed a life. It belongs to a genus all its own. It varies in its manifestations but only within the bounds of faith, hope, and charity. The howdah which it bears—for it must have one, since it is not for ornament but for service—may differ in different lands and times, but that is about all. We may not expect great changes in the form of Christianity both on account of the continuity of this form of life and the persistence of human nature. He who knows the joy of sins forgiven in any age or land wants in some way to witness to the world his gratitude and purpose to lead a better life. If he does not say it by water, as Jesus taught, he will find some like way. His conscious fellowship with the Comrade in White he wishes to symbolize and visualize. If he

does not do it by a morsel of bread and a sip of wine at his Lord's table, he will find some other like way. The new life leads to association with his fellow. If there be no holy Scriptures or Lord's Day he will essay to find or create something like them. In like manner the kingdom of heaven is a complement of man's need, with such a nature as he possesses, and in such a world as ours. It brings him into a larger fellowship and opens up wider horizons. It brings into bold relief the gulf between the children of light and of darkness. It makes more concrete the quest of the Christian. It transfers the arena of the Christian warfare from a valley of mist and shadows to a sun-bathed stadium such as Paul saw with its cloud of witnesses. It brightens and heightens the sense of the nearness of the Divine and in particular of the companionship and guidance of Jesus. It cannot be set aside without great loss. By the same token we know it was meant to abide. We may listen with patience to those who predict the passing of the electric light to the limbo of the lard-

oil lamp and the tallow dip, but not to those who see a day when we shall have no more need of the sun, moon, and stars.

The science of pedagogy points to a like conclusion. It is not concerned with the discovery or the sifting of truth, but only with conveying truths which other sciences have brought to light. Socrates is known as one of the greatest teachers of the past. Yet he had no new doctrines and did not noticeably add to the sum of human knowledge. He had a new method of teaching old truths. He is remembered as the author of the Socratic method of teaching rather than for his contribution to the store of knowledge. In more recent years Pestalozzi and Froebel became known through their method of teaching children. The child mind, just emerging from the animal stage, to which everything is a wonder, fresh and receptive, this was the field occupied by those noted teachers. They had no new truth, but only a new method. In art we read of the school of Giotto, Titian, and Michael Angelo. No one of these had discovered

new landscapes or trees or flowers or types of human excellence to put upon the canvas or carve in marble, but a new way to help men see the beauty all about them and to express it so that others might see. Thus we read of the school of Raphael, or Rubens, or Canova, or of the Berlitz school in language. The teaching of religious truth, whose aim is to bring men into obedient relations with their Maker, is difficult. Men are sometimes ignorant, often prejudiced, wedded to sinful ways, with spiritual faculties blunted and perverted by a sinful past. Nothing that Jesus saw among men so astonished him as the dullness and slowness and aversion of the heart of man. Who has not seen in a Christian assembly those whose puzzled look, half laugh and half scorn, showed how far away all these things were from them? To lead such to give heed, to be willing to follow toward the light, and finally to take the torch into their hands and walk by its light, called for the wisdom of serpents. Jesus had much to teach the world. The question before us is, Did he also have a

world method? What truth did he put first; what doctrine did he emphasize most?

Concerning their deportment, as they went forth as heralds of the Kingdom, Jesus gave specific directions. They were not to tell men to come. They were to go. They must not wait until they arrived at the place where a congregation gathered, but must preach as they went. They must not take an elaborate outfit. One coat was enough, one pair of shoes, one staff. The scribe or hand satchel was to be left at home, together with the purse, whether full or empty. They must really have and manifest a tender and helpful pity toward suffering humanity. They must heal the sick if they could, at least show that they coveted the power to do so; they must cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils, if they could—at least show a spirit that would do so if it could. Entering a city they were to inquire, not for the home of the richest, but the most worthy. If a welcome were extended, there they must abide. They must not advertise themselves as lovers of ease by going from

house to house to find the best. As to food, they were to eat what was set before them without comment, otherwise they would appear more interested in good living than in the souls of men. If ill received or chased away from a city, they must not slink away as cowards, or answer railing by railing, but, preserving their dignity as heralds of the King, shake the dust of the city from their sandals in solemn protest.

Thus specifically concerning externals Jesus instructed his heralds. Accepted and carried out in their true spirit and intent they have never failed to give success to a herald of the Kingdom and are as applicable to this age as to any other. Had he no instructions concerning the more vital and difficult task of presenting the truth? Had Jesus a method concerning the evangelization of the world? Those who have read the preceding chapters of this book are prepared for the affirmation that he had. It is sufficient at this time to point to a single feature in that method. He presented to men specifically and definitely the kingdom of

heaven and bade them strive to enter in. In this kingdom they were to live their life and do their work, embodying more and more the principles of the Kingdom in themselves and yielding more and more to its life till that high tide which we call death came to drift each frail bark out of the kingdom of heaven on earth to the wider sea and kingdom of eternity. To abandon the method of Giotto in painting or of Froebel in teaching; to set aside the method of the experienced fisherman in angling or the skilled sportsman in hunting, is to set them aside, for all they have is a method of doing things. Jesus had truth to bring to men so precious that presented in any way it in the end must reach them. He had also a chosen method. We call him the Great Teacher, and such he was. His method was also great. Should not regard for one who "spake as never man spake," joined with affection for one who loved as never man loved, lead the world to cherish highly and follow closely every suggestion he made? "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Shall we whose empty

fish baskets betray our lack of any method, carelessly set aside suggestions from such a source? If Jesus was a great teacher, can we conceive that he could set forth a method that was out of date before it had a chance to be tried? That was not the thought of the early evangelists.

Among the followers of Jesus was one who, on account of his success in winning men, was called Philip the Evangelist. The title was worthily bestowed, for he won his four daughters, then an African prince, then took the initiative in a movement that stirred a Roman province. His method was preaching "the things concerning the kingdom of God." Paul, the greatest evangelist of these eighteen centuries, had a method. It was that of his Master. Standing among the elders of the church of Ephesus, he summed up his labors—"I went about among you preaching the kingdom." Two precious years, the last probably of his life, were spent as a prisoner in Rome. He was not idle. One notable day he preached, his sermon continuing from morning to evening. His biographer tells us that his

theme was the kingdom of God. The book of Acts closes with the statement that to the last he was "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." It is evident that in the thought of Paul his Master had not only a message but, like all great teachers, had a method. Nothing is more common than to hear Jesus eulogized as "the Great Teacher." May He not be saying to us, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I command you?" Methods of evangelism that were successful a few decades since are waning in power. Could we look in at the study window of many a faithful and well-equipped pastor at the hour of midnight, we should find him on his knees bewailing his want of success in leading men to Christ. May it be because we have abandoned in part the method of Jesus? In his parting address at Bethany he said: "Go into all the world, teaching all things that I have commanded you." Was the kingdom of heaven part of the "all things"?

CHAPTER XVIII

THE KINGDOM TRIUMPHANT

“The world is enlarged for us, not by new objects but by finding more affinities and potencies in those we have.”—*Emerson*.

It has been steadily maintained in these pages that the kingdom of heaven has come, that the King is now upon his throne, that the nature of the kingdom and its laws have been fully declared, and a proclamation issued to all peoples, “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.” That, in a general sense, Christ lives and reigns is conceded. It is quite as evident that he does not reign fully. The world is looking for something more and expecting something to happen. There is a feeling that the program at present is not complete. On many lips is the question, “What next?” Is it not evident that what is lacking is a more complete acceptance of the proclamation of the King? The earth is waiting, but is it not true that Heaven is also waiting? They differ

in this, that God has done all that he can do and man has not done what he could and should do. There is the further difference that God has plenty of time in which to wait and that the men of this generation will soon be in their graves. Men may hasten or delay the full coming of the Kingdom; the ultimate triumph is secure. To the generation in which Jesus lived the offer was made. Some accepted, but as a nation the refusal was complete. Read in the light of the subsequent history of that people how solemn the words of Jesus, "Ye shall not see me from henceforth until ye shall say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'"! The ignominy and sorrow of centuries of persecution and exile have not yet forced that sentence from the lips of that race.

That an acceptance of Jesus and his kingdom on a scale that would entitle it to be called a world-movement may not be expected, at least in our day, is unfounded assumption. Men "think in herds and go mad in herds." As distance vanishes and knowledge grows they incline more and more to act as a whole. The

close of the World War finds the nations weeping together over their dead. They are hungry together and are asking one another for a crust of bread. They go from land to land to borrow from those who would borrow from them. They see factories idle and industries prostrate and know that they do not suffer alone. They are hopeless together. They are weary of government by men and would welcome one that has in it a touch of the Divine. They are tired even of governing themselves. It is night in the world, and out of the darkness comes a many-voiced cry, "Would God it were morning!" Love is a tie that binds, but to suffer together makes men one. In such a condition a petition like that which certain Greeks made to Philip, saying, "We would see Jesus," underwritten in such a manner as to make it a world appeal, is by no means an impossibility. Such a movement could not be called sudden. The great reformation under Luther was not sudden. Preparation for it began centuries before. Its appearance alone was sudden. No ecumenical conference, world

congress or council will suffice. They have their origin and are shaped from without; this must come from within. It must be like the bursting forth of vegetation in the spring which is not settled at a convention of the chief forests and fields but by a spontaneous movement in the tiniest seed and the topmost branch.

The world can emphasize its acceptance of the Kingdom by removing the obstructions in the road. There are valleys to be filled up, hills to be leveled and stones to be removed. They are man-made, and men must be the John the Baptist to remove obstructions and prepare the way. At the outset is a ravine which in places is a veritable quagmire where the chariot wheels of Christianity oft drove heavily and sometimes sank in the mire. It is the swamp of doubt and uncertainty as to the teachings of the Gospels concerning the plan and aim of Jesus and the future of his kingdom. Is Jesus now a real presence and King, committed to a definite program of progress for the human race through forces and by methods that are now at work? On the other hand, is

he an absentee Lord who will return in visible form to reward the righteous and punish the wicked and set up his throne and kingdom on the wreck of a wicked world? A cleavage in the forces of Christianity is painfully apparent at this point. It is not overstating the importance of the subject to affirm that the next practical step is to fill up this piece of very bad road. It is a serious reflection on Jesus to say that though as a teacher he never wandered far from his theme, we cannot certainly know what he intended to teach. It is to make light of the promised aid of the Holy Spirit to the end that we may know. Effort in this direction has been discouraged in the interest of peace. Such a peace is gained at too dear a price. Early in the history of Christianity controversy arose concerning the person, and especially the deity of Christ. There were not wanting those who discouraged discussion because it might lead to schism. They would replace argument about Christ by work to make him known. From many quarters came the reply, "What shall we say when

the world asks, 'Is this Jesus a great man and teacher or is he a god?' Shall we run before we have a message?" To their credit, be it said, they refused to listen to councils of peace. Instead, with the spirit of the Bereans, they turned to the Scriptures and to God. It was a battle royal, but the outcome was the settlement, so far as a question that will not allow a mathematical demonstration can be settled, of the controversy. We now know that the expansion of Christianity which followed would not have been possible without that discussion. Behold a sign of the times! The Christian world is stirred as never before concerning the plan and aim of Jesus. Hail the day! Let those divisions of the church that congratulate themselves that there are no discussions of this theme among them beware lest they boast of having no part in the vision and work of the age. Welcome, rather, a battle of critics, higher and lower, of historians and antiquarians, of exegetes and linguists; a strife of lexicons and grammars, Hebrew and Syriac, Greek and Latin. Above all welcome the

sight of millions of sincere and intelligent Christians, void of prejudices and obsessions, on their knees before God and an open Bible, pleading for the enlightenment of the Divine Spirit.

In the road by which the Kingdom must come is also a hill which must be leveled if the way is prepared. It may well be called the Hill Difficulty since a hill suggests pride and this obstructive hill is the pride men take in their own institutions. This easily leads to the exaltation of the institution. In the mist of laudation the organization gets between men and the purpose for which it was founded.

Organizations, begun in unselfishness, have had their day and departed unregretted, because they did not hold to the original purpose of being a means to an end, rather than an end in themselves. They failed because their *raison d'être* was not clearly defined or steadily kept in mind. An organization, like a man, may lose its soul. This it does when the hour comes that it lives for itself. When it lives to save its own soul it loses it,

and when it loses its soul in something higher it saves it. The roadside along which the kingdom of heaven has come thus far is strewn with the wrecks of organizations that lost their souls in the struggle to exist and, like human bodies after the departure of the spirit, were henceforth tenanted by worms.

There are organizations, Christian and semi-Christian, that can only save their own souls by giving themselves away to the kingdom of heaven.

There is also a crooked place in the road that needs to be straightened. The confusion and loss occasioned by it are great. Haply, it is within the power of men to straighten it out. How like a twisting and tortuous road is the comment which the world makes on the kingdom of heaven! It is praised, even lauded to the skies. One might suppose that there were no longer any unbelievers. In almost the same breath it is said: "But the principles of the Kingdom are Utopian. They are not practicable or workable in this world, at least not in this age. There is the Golden Rule, and 'Thou shalt love

thy neighbor as thyself.' That is beautiful, but in practice it will not work. 'Lay not up treasures upon earth.' If men did that, the financial system of the world would collapse. 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' That sounds well but really who believes it? There is the teaching of Jesus about war and divorce and many other things. As an ideal it is good enough, but it fails when put to the test." So long as the idea prevails that the kingdom of heaven is visionary, it is hindered. At this point there is imperative need of road work. It certainly can be shown that the teachings of Jesus have never been fully tried out, and that in the measure that they have, they have been found to be eminently practical. It is also true that the opposite principles, the right of the strong to rule, an utterly selfish policy in business, the reign of secrecy and intrigue among nations, have been thoroughly tried and found not to work save in the direction of ruin. Speed the day when this crooked place shall be made straight.

Among many stones to be gotten out

of the road is the erroneous idea that the Kingdom may be won by waiting for it. In vain we wait for what has already come. What Heaven can do has been done. It remains for the followers of Jesus to begin at once, and steadfastly continue, the *practice of the kingdom of heaven*. A foremost question among the American people at the close of the Civil War was how to resume specie payment. Many plans were suggested. The Secretary of the Treasury swept them all aside saying, "The only way to resume is to resume."

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